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"Carefull" Ethos: The Construction of Ethos in Dorothy Leigh's The Mothers Blessing

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“CAREFULL” ETHOS: THE CONSTRUCTION OF ETHOS

IN DOROTHY LEIGH’S *THE MOTHERS BLESSING*

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ABSTRACT

“Carefull ‘Ethos’: The Construction of Ethos in Dorothy Leigh’s *The Mothers Blessing*

by

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As one of the most popular conduct manuals in the early seventeenth century, Dorothy Leigh’s *The Mothers Blessing* is often categorized as private, domestic literature. In this dissertation, I examine the strategies Leigh employed to create ethos, and I argue that her strategic depiction of herself as a “fearefull, faithfull, carefull” mother helped her authorize herself as a public figure. Specifically, I investigate the strategies Leigh employed to create a persuasive ethos within the genre of the conduct manual. Through mother-based ethos strategies, Leigh presented herself deliberately, augmenting her authority as *Mother* and positioning her work within a male-dominated print culture that demanded silence, obedience, and chastity of women. Leigh uses *Mother* rhetorically: to carve out her place as an obedient and submissive yet confident woman and to position herself as the *Mother*, who by inhabiting this genre transforms it into a place that gives her writing access to public discourse. I position Dorothy Leigh’s *The Mothers Blessing* in the context of several seventeenth-century political, social, and religious debates, and I argue that Leigh should be seen as a public figure whose career was eminently rhetorical.

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My thanks also to John Bowers, who taught me “everything a graduate student needs to know.” I strive to pass his legacy on to my students. Dorothy Leigh had a vision of what she would do if she were a preacher. For several years, I have nourished my own vision. I have publicly claimed that when I grow up, I want to be John Bowers. He inspires me to be a better teacher.

I thank Richard Harp, who helped me find Dorothy Leigh when she was only a footnote and also Julie Staggers who inspired me to bring Leigh out of footnote status. Staggers’ legacy to me is her undying enthusiasm for all of my projects. Her constant positive attitude continues to give me the courage to try new ideas. She continues to influence the way I research and teach. I would like to thank Ralph Buechler for providing research opportunities that included German literature and poetry. He introduced me to authors who transcended boundaries of genre and time.

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CHAPTER 1

YOUR “FEAREFULL, FAITHFULL, AND CAREFULL” MOTHER

Wherefore setting aside all feare, I have adventured to shew my imperfections to the view of the World, not regarding what censure shall for this bee laid upon mee, so that herein I may shew my selfe a loving Mother, and a dutifull Wife: and thus I leave you to the protection of him that made you, And rest till death,

Your fearefull, faithfull, and carefull Mother, D. L.

In 1616, the last will and testament of William Shakespeare directed that his wife should receive his “second best bed.” It was his legacy to her. He left “One Hundred fyftie pounds of lawful English money” to his daughter Judith and “barnes, stables, Orchardes, gardens, lands, tenements” to his daughter Susanna. He left money to his acquaintances from the theater for the purchase of “Ringes” (*Shakespeare’s Last Will and Testament*). Scholars have debated for centuries what Shakespeare must have meant by leaving his “second best bed” to his wife. We know little about Shakespeare’s personal life. Ultimately, he left a legacy of language that extends far beyond the private sphere of his family.

In 1616 another legacy appeared. In it, a mother offered what she considered to be her most important legacy. Sometimes women left personal items to their posterity or other individuals. Sometimes they left lace. Sometimes they left jewels. Often the items had historical or sentimental value that the person intended to pass on (Helt 196-97). However, women did not usually leave a public, printed document. In 1616, Dorothy Leigh was determined to leave a legacy of language. We know little about Dorothy Leigh’s personal life, but ultimately she left a legacy of language that extends far beyond the private sphere of her family.

In the opening pages of *The Mothers Blessing* Leigh describes herself as a

“fearefull, faithfull, and carefull Mother” who seeks to “write” her sons the “right” way to “climbe the hill to heaven” (4).¹ Her motherly love, her duty to her deceased husband, and her own approaching death motivate her to take the unusual step of publishing her advice. In 1616, there were only a handful of women writers. Leigh justified her unusual decision to publish by explaining: “Neither care I what you or any shall thinke of mee, if among many words I may write but one sentence, which may make you labour for the spirituall food of the soule, which must be gathered every day out of the word” (6).² Instead of showing her weaknesses to the world, Leigh’s conduct manual shows her good sense, good will, and good character.

In this dissertation I argue that Leigh’s deployment of mother-based strategies within the genre of the conduct manual established a powerful *ethos* that moved her writing beyond the genre of the domestic conduct manual and into a broader discussion of social, political, and religious concerns. More specifically, I explore the high stakes of *ethos* for women writing in the early seventeenth century.

In an attempt to untangle the terms associated with *ethos*, I recall that “No other Aristotelian ‘proof’ has been subjected to more empirical examination than *ethos*” (C. Smith 2); however, we continue to struggle to understand *ethos* (Kenny 34).

¹*The Mothers Blessing* went through at least nineteen editions from 1616 until 1640 (Gray, *Women Writers* 204; Gray, “Feeding on the Seed” 563; M. Davis 291). It went through at least 23 editions between 1616 and 1674 (Dowd 146). It was published in at least three editions with an adapted version of King James’s *Basilikon Doron* (Gray 204 n4). The Short Title Catalogue lists at least twenty-two editions through 1729 (Heller 1n2). According to Teresa Feroili, it was “the seventeenth century’s best-selling text authored by a woman” (89). Critics often claim that the next most popular text was Elizabeth Jocelin’s *The Mothers Legacie, To her Vnborne Childe*, which went through seven editions from 1622 to 1635 (Anselment 431; Teague 258).

² Throughout this project original spelling, punctuation, and capitalization have been preserved as they appear in the second edition of *The Mothers Blessing* published in 1616. I have silently replaced *v* with *u* for readability.

The term *ethos* was used by Aristotle as one of three *pisteis*, or kinds of proof, listed in the *Rhetoric*. The three *pisteis* are *logos* (appeal to reason), *pathos* (appeal to emotion about the topic of discussion, and *ethos* (appeal to the audience's trust in the speaker's character). Although Aristotle presents these three as being coequal, he acknowledges in his writing his contemporaries who dismiss the importance of *ethos*. In response, he asserts that "character is almost, so to speak, the controlling factor in persuasion" (1.2.4 1356a). For Aristotle, *ethos* is inherently situational, grounded in a public setting in which the character traits of the speaker only have meaning in relation to the values of the audience. He writes that an audience's "conception of the speaker's *ethos* should result from the speech, not from a previous opinion that the speaker is a certain kind of person" (1.2.4 1356a). It is important for the speaker to "construct a view of himself as a certain kind of person," so the speaker must analyze the audience and adapt the message toward them: "the speaker [must] seem to be a certain kind of person and hearers [must] suppose him to be disposed toward them in a certain way." The speaker is most successful if "they [the audience], too, happen to be disposed in a certain way" (2.1.2-3 1377b). However, the audience may not know the speaker personally, and Aristotle suggests that this lack of knowledge gives the speaker a clean slate. For Aristotle, constructing *ethos* is a matter of clear and deliberate choice.

Several scholars have turned toward spatial concepts of *dwelling*, *habitation*, and *location* to capture the complexities of *ethos*, particularly the dynamic between individual agency (strategy) and structuring social forms (constraint). Michael Hyde suggests that we look back to the "primordial" meaning of *ethos*—before Aristotle's translations as "moral character" and "ethics"—and see *ethos* as "dwelling places." This re-vision of

ethos invites us to “appreciate how the *premises* and other materials of arguments. . . mark out the *boundaries* and *domains* of thought that, depending on how their specific discourses are *designed* and *arranged*, may be particularly inviting and moving for some audiences” (xiii).

In *The Ethos of Rhetoric*, Hyde compiles essays that explain the way discourse is used to transform space and time into “dwelling places” where people deliberate. The essays define the *grounds*, *abodes*, and *habitats* where a person’s ethics and moral character take form and develop (xiii). I embrace Aristotle’s notions of *ethos* as the rhetor’s character and ethics, including the critical relationship between the rhetor and the audience with particular emphasis on the importance of a speaker’s motivation and the potential effect of the discourse on the audience’s decisions and actions. In addition, I embrace the notion of *ethos* that spatial terms offer, and I consider the spatial conception of *ethos* as a logical extension to the classical definitions. For good or ill, *ethos* is always being constructed. Classical definitions encourage us to look for *ethos* in certain places in a discourse; spatial terminology acknowledges the pervasive nature of *ethos* in any given discourse.

My discussion of Leigh’s *Mothers Blessing* benefits from this combined approach to *ethos* because spaces and places were changing during the seventeenth century. For example, the renaissance humanist’s emphasis on the family influenced the way the interiors of churches were built. Families became the dominant unit in the church, and church interiors were remodeled to allow families to be seated together rather than males on one side and females on the other (MacCulloch 661). In addition, family dwellings were changing to represent a new emphasis on private spaces in the home. Architectural

style reflected privatization; houses became smaller with rooms specially furnished for individual family members (Habermas 45). A conflict between public and private roles of homes caused Sir Henry Wotton (1624) to complain that “[Home builders] want other Galleries, and Roomes of Retreate,” which created “a kind of conflict between their *Dwelling*, and their *Being*” (75). In other words, he wonders at individuals’ desire for public galleries as well as private spaces within the home. *The elements of architecture, collected by Henry Wotton Knight, from the best authors and examples* describes the home as “the Theater of his hospitality, the Seale of Self-fruition, the Comfortablest part of his owne Life, the Noblest of his Sonnes Inheritance, a kinde of private Princedome; Nay to the Possessors thereof, an Epitomie of the whole world“ (47). Homes were becoming complex private places.

And finally, genres were changing as they became inhabited by writers who appropriated them as conceived spaces to come together with others through print in order to “deliberate about and collectively understand” their world (Hyde xvi). Spatial terms add depth to my discussion of the production of seventeenth-century ethos.

Leigh constructs ethos as a Mother. She cements the relationship between herself and her audience that enables her to write a “domestic advice” book that became a bestselling book of the early seventeenth century. In *The Mothers Blessing*, Leigh covers a broad range of social, political, and religious issues that might be considered outside of the boundaries for a woman who was supposed to be chaste, silent, and obedient.³

³ See Suzanne Hull’s *Chaste, Silent, and Obedient*. Diarmaid MacCulloch extends Hull’s definition. He relates, “The ideal wife was of course obedient to her husband, but she was also a calm and experienced companion, ready to give advice and help. . . also to sustain the cheerfulness of her spouse and her children” (650). In this project, I wish to challenge the traditional feminist notions of “silent” and “obedient.” In some cases, an “obedient” female was required to be vocal, and sometimes silence constituted a resounding form of resistance. Patricia Phillippy’s *Women, Death and Literature in Post-Reformation England* provides instances of publically approved female reproof of husbands (107) and of

This dissertation project seeks to answer these general research questions:

- *What rhetorical strategies made Leigh’s writing successful in the male-dominated print culture?*
- *In what ways did genre constrict and enable her writing?*
- *How does the concept of “domestic space” constrain and enable the production and consumption of *The Mothers Blessing*?*

More specifically, I want to explore the following questions:

- *Which rhetorical strategies contribute specifically to the formation of ethos in *The Mothers Blessing*?*
- *How does Leigh’s conduct manual interact with other early seventeenth-century genres?*
- *How does spatial rhetoric help interpret and articulate Leigh’s contributions to seventeenth-century rhetoric?*

To answer these questions, I take *The Mothers Blessing* off of the conduct manual shelf and place it in the company of books written by kings, preachers, and “giddy-headed young men.”⁴ Because Dorothy Leigh is relatively unknown, I provide some information about her here.

Who is Dorothy Leigh

The title page of *The Mothers Blessing* (1616) describes its author as a “gentlewoman, not long since deceased.” Leigh’s biographical information is sketchy. As a young woman, Dorothy Kempe married Ralph Leigh, who is described as a “Cheshire gentleman and soldier under the Earl of Essex at Cadiz” (M. Davis 291).

silent resistance (125).

⁴ Joseph Swetnam addresses “giddy-headed young men” in his pamphlet *The Araignment of Lewd, Idle Froward, and Unconstant Women* (1615). He implicates himself as one of them.

Although little is known of Dorothy Leigh's early years, some information regarding her husband Ralph is available. Ralph was the fourth son of Thomas Leigh and his wife Sybil. He had four brothers and five sisters. One of Ralph's brothers, Uriam, was knighted after a battle in 1597. We also know a little about Ralph Leigh's death. According to one source, Ralph Leigh was slain in 1597 in Newry, Ireland while in the service of the Earl of Essex (Gray, *Women Writers* 52).⁵ Ralph and Dorothy Kempe Leigh had three sons: George, John, and William. Leigh addresses *The Mothers Blessing* to them.

Leigh comes from an area known for its connection to militant Protestantism. Catharine Gray claims that what we know about Leigh's history links her to the strongly Protestant area of Essex and to "a community of Puritans who became increasingly radical as the religio-political situation polarized, first under James and later under Charles and Laud" (*Women Writers* 46). Between 1602 and 1616 cases of nonconformity in that area more than doubled, and many of the charges raised in those cases included accusations of gadding and opposition to churching women. Also, between 1609 and 1642 the number of lecturers in Essex who were classified as "zealous, militantly apocalyptic" preachers also more than doubled (46).

In addition, Jennifer Heller notes a possible connection between William Leigh (Dorothy Leigh's son) and the Winthrop family, who had the rectory at Groton Suffolk before the Winthrops immigrated to New England and joined the Congregational church. William Leigh was possibly beneficed as a parson by the Winthrop family (111).⁶ If the

⁵ Poole traces a family connection between Dorothy Leigh and Elizabeth Jocelin, who wrote *A Mothers Legacie* (1617). She places them in the same general area, neighbors and family friends. There appear to be marriage and family relationships between the two families.

⁶ Jennifer Heller references a letter written by John Winthrop. The letter describes William Leigh as "a

biographical information from Gray is accurate, then Leigh's husband was killed in approximately 1597. This means that at the time of her death Leigh would have been a widow for approximately twenty years, and assuming her sons were fairly young at the time of their father's death, they would have been raised exclusively by their mother. They would have been young men of marriageable age (or perhaps already married) at the time of Leigh's death and the publication of *The Mothers Blessing*. There is no record that Leigh remarried.

Most early modern widows and widowers remarried. If Leigh remained unmarried for twenty years, this would have been highly unusual. It is not, however, unprecedented. John Donne remained a widower for the remainder of his life after Anne Donne died. Widows are an under-researched seventeenth-century population. Pearl Hogrefe notes that an unmarried widow had almost the same rights as a man (11). However, it is worth noting that a widow faced several challenges when it came to maintaining a noble form of ethos. Widows were often seen as usurping power and inverting the patriarchal system. A widow who could maintain credibility with her audience—even after death—shows a great deal of skill. Many widows struggled to maintain their reputations. Anne Clifford was admired but also castigated while she lived and also posthumously.⁷ Lady Elizabeth Russell was and is also admired for her education, but there are stories about her abuse of motherly authority. The legends about her are perpetuated to this day. They include an account that she beat and ultimately

man of good parts. . . as sociable and full of good discourse as I have known" (111; Winthrop 346-47). Although Leigh did not live to see it, William took her advice and became a preacher, the rector of Grotton in Suffolk, and his patron was John Winthrop, who later became governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony.

⁷ See Edith Snook *Women, Beauty, and Power in Early Modern England*, especially Chapter 6 "An 'absolute Mistris of her Self': Anne Clifford and the Luxury of Hair" (144-160) and Patricia Phillippy's *Women, Death, and Literature*, particularly Chapter 6 "'Quod licuit feci': Elizabeth Russell and the power of public mourning" (179-210).

caused the death of one of her sons who was not learning quickly enough. The legend claims that her ghost continues to walk the halls of the ancestral home. This is the kind of legacy that a widow who was perceived as overstepping patriarchal boundaries might face.

The Stationers' Register shows that on February 26, Master Sanford and Master warden Swinhowe entered *The Mothers Blessing* written by "Mistris Dorathy Leighe," to be printed by John Budge. Helen Smith explains that Stationers' Hall was a "complex space with unclear boundaries" (132). The Stationers' company was established in the last years of Mary Tudor's reign and marked an important stage in the organization and self-identity of the London Book Trade—while the collapse of licensing during the Civil Wars significantly altered the landscape of print (6).⁸ The Stationers' company took seriously their role as guardians of inheritances, probably in part because of the capital they secured (132).

Leigh's entry in the Stationers' Register does not offer information about who submitted the manuscript for publication or who benefitted from the sale of her popular book. In many cases, widows and children received compensation from the Register for decades after a book written by a husband or father was published. Sanford and Swinhowe, the "Masters" who entered Leigh's book for publication, are specifically mentioned in publications that required the transfer of goods to deceased authors' estates, usually to widows and children of male authors. If the information in Leigh's preface is reliable, then Leigh planned to have her book published posthumously (See *Leigh*

⁸ The Stationers' company was originally organized to stop the publication of Protestant propaganda during Mary Tudor's reign, and they continued to be a policing force of sorts. Early modern England had no equivalent figure for an "editor," so although many books were edited, we have scanty records about how or by whom the process occurred.

Chapter 2). As a widow, Leigh would have had nearly the same privileges as a male (Hogrefe 11), and she would also have had the experience as executrix of her husband's will. Widows often planned more carefully and were generally more prepared for their own deaths (Phillippy 59). The Stationers' Register was probably responsible for distributing the profits from Leigh's popular book.

Brief Summary of *The Mothers Blessing*

Dorothy Leigh's *Mothers Blessing* is a book of advice written by an early seventeenth-century mother who is also a widow. Some of the advice is typical, but much of it is not typical. It aims at a wide audience as it engages a broad range of contemporary social, political, and religious issues. It is a moving and powerful discourse of an intelligent and courageous mother as well as a commentary on her time.

A more technical description would be that *The Mothers Blessing* is a spiritual conduct manual, similar in some ways to other early modern spiritual conduct manuals but significantly different in many other ways. It is written for the benefit of the author's sons, but she clearly intends for the book to be published. It went through at least 23 editions between 1616 and 1674 (Dowd 146). This means that it was popular by all standards of comparison. The proem, or introductory section, of *The Mothers Blessing* includes three sections: a dedication to James's daughter Princess Elizabeth, an address to her three sons, and an original poem that contrasts an industrious bee to an idle bee. After the proem material, the book's remaining 270 pages are divided into forty-five chapters. The chapters are interrelated, but each could stand alone. Some of the themes of the chapters repeat themselves, which suggests that Leigh organized the material into specific "chunks" that belong together. For example, not all of the material about *prayer*

is in one chapter. *Prayer* appears in several sections, but each section is coherently organized as an independent chunk of text.⁹ Each chapter is linked to the subsequent chapter by a clear transition that looks back to the previous chapter by repeating phrases and themes.

Why Write about Dorothy Leigh?

Although the seventeenth century reveled in its conduct books and produced them in unprecedented numbers, the number of conduct manuals written by women can be counted on one hand. Dorothy Leigh's *The Mothers Blessing* was published in three times as many editions as King James's bestseller book *Basilikon Doron*, and it was bound in three separate editions with an adapted version of the king's book (Gray 204). However, despite its popularity, *The Mothers Blessing* has received very little critical attention. There have been approximately seventeen dissertations that include Dorothy Leigh and about the same number of critical articles. She appears in a few chapter titles and surfaces in a few other books.¹⁰ There is no edited version of *The Mothers Blessing*. There are no book-length studies or edited collections of articles that discuss Leigh's writing. Excerpted pages of *The Mothers Blessing* appear in increasing numbers in anthologies,¹¹ but the full text of *The Mothers Blessing* is available only through

⁹ This aspect of the text has led some critics to identify the text as unorganized (Sizemore 44), but a closer look reveals careful organization strategies of deliberately "chunked" portions of text.

¹⁰ In *Women Writers and Public Debate*, Gray includes a chapter titled "The Zealous Mother: Dorothy Leigh and the Godly Family." In *Women, Reading, and the Cultural Politics of Early Modern England*, Edith Snook includes a chapter titled, "Dorothy Leigh, the 'Labourous Bee,' and the Work of Literacy in Seventeenth-Century England. In *Women's Work in Early Modern English Literature and Culture*, Michael Dowd includes several references to Leigh in the chapter "Household Pedagogies: Female Educators and the Language of Legacy," and finally, in *The Mother's Legacy in Early Modern England*, Jennifer Heller includes references to Leigh in several chapters, most notably in the chapter "Religion and Reform, 1603-1623."

¹¹ Exerpts of *The Mothers Blessing* appear in several anthologies, including Sylvia Brown's *Women's Writing in Stuart England: The Mothers' Legacies of Dorothy Leigh, Elizabeth Joscelin, and Elizabeth Richardson*; *Lay By Your Needles Ladies, Take the Pen*, Edited by Suzanne Trill, Kate Chedgzoy, and Melanie Osborne. Most anthologies usually include excerpts about choosing a wife or her introductory

databases or archival research. The downloadable print versions from the Early English Books Online database omit all of the author's marginal comments and references. The margins of most of the prose genres were wide and filled with notations and references that share valuable insight into the source of material.

Leigh's *Mothers Blessing* provides a particularly rich site to study women's rhetoric of the early seventeenth century because it was a best seller. This project offers a sustained and in-depth look at Leigh's *The Mothers Blessing*. Furthermore, Leigh's writing offers insight into three particular areas of seventeenth-century writing: genre, rhetorical space, and ethos.

Genres, as they appeared in the early sixteenth century, were complex and often lumped together. Some genres that were considered second-class are ignored all together. Or it may be that we simply do not know what to do with them. Often these second-class genres (such as libels) are disinherited from the canon. Although conduct manuals in general have been referred to lately as "rhetoric of dissent" (Gray 42), Dorothy Leigh's conduct manual is usually carelessly thrown into the heap of female-authored conduct manuals rather than allowed to stand on its own merits. McIlwain claims that "it would be wrong to think of the innumerable books which poured from the presses between 1606 and 1620 as merely the work of detached individuals" (McIlwain lviii). However, the tendency of research in this area is often to investigate works in isolation or only briefly.

Leigh's writing expands and complicates the definitions of seventeenth-century genres. Researchers often place *The Mothers Blessing* in the company of the dying-parent legacy genre or the mother's legacy. They often dismiss it as intimate motherly advice.

material.

However, Leigh's writing does not sit comfortably among other motherly advice books, most of which are written after her book was published. In fact, *The Mothers Blessing's* final chapter includes a stinging condemnation of the mismanagement practices of princes and a plea to the people to pray for the preachers. These kinds of comments are not found in dying-parent legacies written by either male or female.

Quentin Skinner suggests looking into what writers are *doing* in the text (7). I extend Skinner's query by asking also *why* the author is doing what she does. As far as I know, no one has substantially questioned Leigh's motivation or discussed all of her reasons for publication. Leigh claims to be forced to publish due to her husband's "will," her love and concern for her children, and because, as she worries, her oldest son might hoard the manuscript. This last reason makes no sense in the manuscript culture of the 1600s because manuscripts were often copied and circulated widely. Motherly counsel from Leigh could easily have been copied for Leigh's three sons. The possibility that *The Mothers Blessing* may have been circulated as a manuscript or that it may be the fruition of a commonplace book that includes reproduced and embellished responses to contemporary sermons has not been investigated.

The Mothers Blessing is a tightly organized and carefully crafted treatise that contains political and social references. It also suggests that the author is a Calvinist Puritan, who was a nonconformist but not a separatist. Leigh was not a radical. Ironically, that makes her more unique as a female writer. Many of the later "sermons" written by women were radical, such as Margaret Fell's writing that is now seen as laying the foundation for the Quakers. Leigh's "sermon" is similar to the nonconforming preachers who were often censored, but they were not radical separatists. In this light,

The Mothers Blessing extends and complicates the definitions of seventeenth-century genres.

In addition to offering deeper insight into genre, Leigh's writing helps us understand the complexities of early modern rhetorical spaces as they were being defined: public spheres versus private spheres. Researchers often separate public writing and private writing, with public writing meriting more scholarly debate than the private sphere. The genres that I present in this project strongly suggest that the line between public and private writing is dubious at best. Leigh's book exemplifies writing that originated in what appears to be a private sphere, but it was clearly intended to be public. What are we to make of an individual who writes from the private sphere? Can she address a public audience? How and when is it acceptable? Did the conduct manual genre offer the path of least resistance?

All discourse emanates from a particular space. Leigh's discourse emanates from the complex domestic space of *home*, but home is—for Leigh—a *space* where even the walls talk, and where, as John Dod explains the public function of a private *home*:

Notwithstanding that this woman, together with her notable works be shut up and limited within the wals of her owne house, yet her praise passing forth, and climbing up the top of the house commeth & appeareth at the holy seate of justice. . . lifted up into an open place, from whence their virtue may be seene of all.

(“*Bathsehbaes Instructions*” 77)

In the context of Dod's sermon, the woman's moral character becomes a public mirror for both men and women to emulate. Definitions of public and private space appear in a wide range of genres and discourse. It is as if the early modern writers and readers are

trying to refashion *space* as they refashion themselves, and Leigh's text provides an example of the complexities of spatial boundaries.

Finally, Leigh's writing is a rich site to study the construction of ethos in the early years of the seventeenth century. Early modern women are often presented as highly emotional beings who are justified for transgressing print boundaries due to their excess of emotion.¹² Women's writing could be described as the spontaneous overflow of female emotion reproduced onto a printed page. The gendered positioning of these emotional outbursts often leaves little room for a discussion of the other appeals such as logos or ethos. Positioning the author within an accurate historical context is critical to understanding his or her texts. This was a time of self-fashioning and self-representation. How did these notions affect ethos? There is little critical research investigating the role and creation of ethos in female-authored writing. Logos is still the favored rhetorical appeal, and ethos strategies have been largely ignored (Christoph 662).

One of the most inviting contributions of this project is that it offers us a glimpse of the evolution and importance of ethos. Leigh provides a stark contrast to those women writers whose writings are characterized by excessive ethos. Leigh's careful and deliberate construction of herself as a credible mother provides us with a sense of not only the importance of ethos but also the means to ethos in the seventeenth century.

Historical Context

In 1616, Dorothy Leigh's *Mothers Blessing* was published. According to Leigh, this was a time when "there were so many godly books in the world, that they mould in some mens studies, while there masters are mard, because they will not meditate upon

¹² See Patricia Phillippy's introductory chapter in *Women, Death and Literature in Post-Reformation England* for a thorough discussion of the perception of women as being overly emotional and men being the rational beings.

them” (5). “Godly books” were not the only kinds of books being published. The average number of titles annually printed in the forty-year period between the death of Elizabeth and the beginning of the English Civil War roughly doubled from about 250 per year to 500 (Rigney 204). King James was one of the authors who published in the early years of the century.

In 1603, King James VI and I ascended to the English throne.¹³ The new king enjoyed some common pursuits, such as hunting, but he also enjoyed the very abnormal pursuit of writing books (Peck 8). His entry into England brought with it “an explosion of print” (4), as his conduct manual *Basilikon Doron*, or *The Royal Gift*, went through eight editions and thousands of copies in the first few weeks of James’s reign (Wormald 51). *Basilikon Doron* was originally written as James’s book of advice for his son Prince Henry, but it was reprinted for the public shortly before James came to England as her new king after Queen Elizabeth died.

The renaissance was a time of economic, political, and religious turmoil. Stephen Greenblatt has correctly named it a time of self-fashioning (*Renaissance Self-Fashioning* 1), but many of the printed books indicate it was also a time for trying to refashion others. A good deal of publications sought to instruct others about where they belonged and how they should behave. Charles McIlwain claims that early modern thought “exhausted itself” on topics of obedience and authority in all aspects of society: home, government, and religion (xx).

In order to establish a patriarchal monarchy in the wake of Elizabeth’s long rule, James perpetuated the image of himself as the “father” of the British realm. In *The Trew Law of Free Monarchies*, James describes his relationship with his subjects in familial

¹³ Throughout the remainder of this dissertation I will refer to James VI and I as *James I*.

terms: “The King towards his people is rightly compared to a father of children, and to a head of a body composed of diverse members” (76). He also describes himself as the husband with the “whole British Isle” as his wife (“Speech as it was delivered” 136). And finally, he is “God’s lieutenant in earth. . . God’s minister . . . judged only by God” (*The Trew Law* 72). James’s English subjects were concerned by his insistence of divine kingship. At the same time, James resented any attempts to minimize his authority.

Shortly after James’s entrance into London, a group of disaffected Catholics tried to assassinate James and members of Parliament by attempting to blow up parliament while it was in session. The Gunpowder Plot, as it became known, gave rise to the Oath of Allegiance,¹⁴ which essentially nullified the Pope’s power over the king. British subjects were required to take the Oath or suffer imprisonment or the loss of goods (Sommerville, Introduction xx). This Oath gave rise to paper warfare all over Europe the like of which has never been seen since and is hardly likely to ever happen again (McIlwain lvii). In short, the oath attempted to situate authority ultimately with the king, as the head of the Church, rather than the pope. James was not a humble person, and debates often became heated. One of the main challenges he encountered as king was misunderstandings between himself and the English people. Jenny Wormald regrettably explains that “tactlessness was writ large virtually every time [he] opened his mouth in England: and tactlessness hardly made for mutual trust” (38).

Conduct manuals and sermons stressed that family governance mirrored the monarchy, with the father as the “head” and the wife as the “body.” It was the duty of the king or head to command, and the duty of the wife or body to obey. But in reality,

¹⁴ The Gunpowder plot was an attempt by a group of disaffected Catholics to blow up parliament while it was in session. The plot was exposed and several people were executed.

relationships were complex, and many of the “godly” books and sermons attempted to sort it all out. By 1616, the king complained that he was “wearied by the controversies that surround the crown,” and he described the crown as “heavy.” It was “a thorny piece of stuff and full of continual cares” (James I, *Meditations* 231).¹⁵

There are a few reasons that the crown would feel “thorny” in the early 1600s. By 1616, the “talk of all England” was the Overbury Scandal, which was a court scandal of sex, murder, and intrigue that spread across England and the continent in a popular culture print phenomena that had never existed before in England. Frances Howard sued for annulment from her husband, the Earl of Essex, in order to marry one of the king’s favourites—Richard Carr. In a public divorce trial she accused Essex of impotence—with only her, but not with other women. In the course of the trial, Carr and one of his associates, Thomas Overbury, had a falling out, and Overbury ended up in the Tower. James granted the divorce and provided a lavish wedding for Carr and Howard, who was viewed by the public as possessing some kind of “popish” witchcraft abilities. In the meantime, Overbury was slowly poisoned by Carr and Howard.¹⁶ To hasten his death, accomplices gave Overbury a poison enema. The court convicted Carr and Howard along with three other accomplices for Overbury’s murder.

¹⁵ *Meditations* was originally planned as a sequel to *Basilikon Doron*. In it, James relates the story of Antigonus, who told an old wife who was praising his reign that if she knew how many evils that “clout” was “stuffed with,” she would not take it up if she found it lying on the ground. The second story is of Damocles and the sword suspended perpendicularly over the king’s head constantly, and he concludes with the story of Henry V, who took the crown from his father Henry IV while Henry IV lay ill. Upon finding the cares that accompanied the crown, Henry V returned it to his father and said if he had known what a crown was, he would not have been so hasty, for he protested that he was never a day without trouble since it was first put upon his head” (*Meditations* 231).

¹⁶ I discuss the Overbury Scandal at length in subsequent chapters. Alastair Bellamy’s *The Politics of Court Scandal in Early Modern England* offers an in-depth discussion of the context, events, and dissemination of information. He notes particularly the relatively new phenomenon of the distribution of information, even internationally. So, the scandal plays itself on a public stage before a new audience, namely a more literate public (see page 135).

The three accomplices were executed, but James pardoned Carr and Howard even though Howard openly admitted her guilt. The scandal is significant because of the unprecedented press that it received, which turned it into an international scandal. James, as the “husband” of the “whole isle,” was seen as an inept ruler of his “family,” and his court was seen as a place of corruption and excess (Lee 316).¹⁷ The Overbury Scandal emphasized the danger of inverting the patriarchal order. Frances Howard repeatedly violated patriarchal norms of modest female behavior (Bellamy 137); she represented the disasters that occurred when a woman stepped outside of assigned boundaries. *The Wife*, a long poem written by Thomas Overbury before the scandal erupted, became a best-seller after his murder. Ironically, it described the ideal wife, and it often included additional prefatory poems praising Overbury as a Protestant martyr. The entire Overbury Scandal was considered a “popish plot,” and conduct manuals, sermons, and pamphlets stressed anew proper conduct for men and women.

There were other “thorny” issues for James as well. By 1614, James was actively negotiating a marriage for his son Charles to the Spanish Bride. This caused alarm for many of his subjects. His actions appeared to contradict the advice he had written earlier. In *Basilikon Doron*, James had advised his son Henry,¹⁸ “Therefore, I would ratherst have you to marry one that were of your own religion.” He told Henry to weigh carefully the consequences of his choice for a wife because “disagreement in religion bringeth ever with it disagreement. . . among your subjects, taking their example from your family” (41). Threats of a Spanish invasion and popish plots also swirled. Parliament attempted to intervene in the marriage plans, and it was promptly dismissed. Many individuals

¹⁷ In *Great Britain's Solomon*, Maurice Lee Jr. argues that the Overbury murder was the best known murder in the annals of James's reign (242) and that James's monarchy never recovered from the scandal (158).

¹⁸ James's son Henry had died in 1612.

believed that James should abandon plans for the marriage and take up instead the cause of the Protestants in the thirty-year war that directly involved his daughter and son-in-law, Elizabeth and Fredrick. James refused and reminded parliament that “Kings sit in the Throne of God” and that Parliament should “hereafter keepe within [its] limits” and not “meddle with things against the Kings Prerogative” (“Speech in Star Chamber 1616” 205-218). Because of his insistence that Charles marry the Catholic “Infanta” and because of his refusal to defend Elizabeth and Fredrick in the “Protestant cause,” James was seen by many as a “sorry protector” of the Protestant faith (McIlwain lxxx).

During the early years of the seventeenth century, writers forged and challenged political theory. Preachers delivered and printed sermons in unprecedented numbers. A newly literate public consumed publications ranging from sermons to libels. Conduct manuals attempted to define the roles for everyone in society. For instance, Erasmus’ *Seven dialogues both pithie and profitable. The 1 is of the right vse of things indifferent. 2 sheweth what comfort poperie affordeth in time of daunger. 3 is betweene a good woman and a shrew. 4 is of the conversion of a harlot. 5 is of putting forth children to nurse. 6 is of a popish pilgrimage. 7 is of a popish funeral* contained a set of instructions for practically everyone on how to conduct or fashion themselves. Dorothy Leigh’s popular *Mothers Blessing* was right in the thick of such advice. In the first half of the seventeenth century, Dorothy Leigh’s conduct manual was printed in approximately the same number of editions as Erasmus’s *In Praise of Folly* (Sayer 240).¹⁹

¹⁹ Sayer notes that Erasmus’s *In Praise of Folly* went through approximately two dozen editions in Erasmus’s lifetime. Leigh’s book went through approximately 23 editions in a much shorter span of years, approximately thirty years. Of course, Erasmus’s book is still in print today, and Dorothy Leigh’s book is virtually unknown. My point is that Leigh’s book went through the same number of editions in thirty years that Erasmus’s book went through in seventy years and therefore was a popular and often relied upon text in her day. It should be noted, however, that Erasmus wrote in Latin for an international audience. Therefore, Leigh’s use of English deserves consideration.

Erasmus, Leigh, and other renaissance humanists told individuals that they could and should “fashion themselves.” The emphasis on the individual potential and on education opened the door for numerous debates. Public debate drew heavily on rhetorical theory, and rhetoric was itself being “fashioned.”

Seventeenth-Century Rhetoric

Courtesy books provide instructions for people who want to “fashion” themselves by learning about various topics such as the power of language, especially for potential social climbers during the turbulent years of Elizabeth and of James. Courtesy books are aligned closely with early modern rhetoric texts, especially with Baldassare Castiglione’s *The Book of the Courtier* (1528), which was one of the earliest manuals of self-fashioning. Courtesy books provide instruction about various topics, including the power of language. An individual could learn to “behave, talk, and write like a member of the upper social classes (“Renaissance Rhetoric” 571). Cheryl Glenn has noted that “style made the rhetorical man” (*Rhetoric Retold* 167). I would add that style probably made a few rhetorical (wo)men as well. Seventeenth-century rhetoric is perhaps one of the most complex periods of rhetoric to define. Any discussion of renaissance or early modern rhetoric begins with Cicero.

In school young men learned rhetoric by studying the writing of Cicero and all of the stylistic tropes and figures that went along with it. However, there was a sense of “newfangledness” in the air. It was the new “plain style” of Peter Ramus (1515-1572). Ramus attacked classical rhetoric, but, he did not necessarily strip rhetoric down to the subject and the verb. He rearranged terms and redefined rhetoric by privileging logic. Unlike Cicero, Ramus felt rhetoric was not a means to create knowledge. That privilege

belonged to *logic*. The conflicting theories of Cicero and Ramus created debate in the seventeenth century and affected the perception and teaching of rhetoric for centuries thereafter.

During the seventeenth century, a literate person would have been aware of these conflicting theories. The controversy centered on the plain style of Peter Ramus versus the more elaborate style of the Roman orator Cicero. The camps divided themselves along lines that reflected political affiliations. A literate individual would also have been knowledgeable about and involved in the debate. Ramus' plain style was associated with the Puritans, the republicans, and those who rejected ornamentation and followed Seneca and Tacitus. The neo-Ciceronian camp, on the other hand, preferred more amplification, acknowledged the five-part domain of rhetoric, usually adhered to a royalist political affiliation, and were often Roman Catholics seeking to rescue rhetoric from the plain style. Unfortunately during the renaissance era,²⁰ a person's speech or writing could also mean life or death (or at least hands and ears).²¹ James himself claims to favor the plain style because, after all, he believed that what he had to say was important, and important topics required a plain style, as far as Ramus and King James were concerned (*Basilikon Doron* 53).

However, the battle lines between Cicero and Ramus are not as clearly delineated as they may seem. Erasmus (1515-1572) transmitted much of Cicero's theory to the early modern world. Because "not every man has the means to visit the city of "Corinth,"

²⁰For Bizell and Herzberg, the renaissance extends up until the mid 1660s. The proposed dates contribute to the messiness of this time period. No one knows exactly when one period stops and another begins, and Jacobean times are often merged with the renaissance, rather than identified as early modern.

²¹A common sentence for any kind of sedition was to have one's ears or hands cut off. Diarmaid MacCulloch relates the punishment of Henry Burton, previously a private chaplain to Prince Henry, who was handed a "ruinous fine and cropping of ears" for his opposition to James's authority (see MacCulloch 577). Also, as *The Marprelate Pamphlets* show that a person could be executed or imprisoned for participating in what authorities deemed as seditious (see MacCulloch 387 and *The Marprelate Pamphlets*)

Erasmus tried to bring “Corinth” to every man. He was concerned by what teachers of rhetoric were saying. He claimed that they

pile up meaningless heap of words and expressions without any discrimination, and thus obscure the subject they are talking about, as well as belaboring the ears of their unfortunate audience. In fact, quite a few persons of no real education or understanding have, heaven help us, undertaken to give instruction in this very subject, and these, while professing a mastery of *copia*, have merely revealed their own total lack of it. (597)

Erasmus wanted to motivate students to supply themselves with an arsenal of words and subject matter so that their ideas could flow. He looked to Cicero as the great father of all eloquence and encouraged students to follow Cicero’s example. In *De Copia*, he describes gathering commonplace sayings as “knocking door to door so to speak,” especially knocking on the doors of Cicero and Quintilian (615). Putting commonplace sayings in “places” and organizing material is critical, “so our student will flit like a busy bee through the entire garden” (623). *De Copia* dominated rhetoric instruction in both Latin and the vernacular languages throughout northern Europe for most of the sixteenth century. However, Erasmus’s relationship to rhetoric was “subtle” in that he “opposed the rigid Ciceronianism of his day,” and he distrusted the “verbal performance” advocated by Castiglione’s *Courtier* (“Renaissance Rhetoric” 582). To Erasmus, good style need not avoid ornamentation and rhetorical polish, yet it should remain flexible and adaptive. He advocated a modified style of Cicero, plainer than Cicero, but not as plain as Ramus. Erasmus was somewhere in the middle and influenced Thomas Wilson as well as other authors of popular rhetoric textbooks.

In *The Arte of Rhetorique* Thomas Wilson (1523-1581) drew heavily from Erasmus. In contrast to Erasmus, however, Wilson published in English. This brought “Corinth” to the Englishman and to some Englishwomen who were excluded from a classical education but were expected to teach their children the first of the seven liberal sciences. The seven liberal sciences included grammar, rhetoric and logic (the first three of the seven sciences). Wilson defines rhetoric as “an art to set further by utteraunce of words, matter at large, or (as Cicero doeth saie) it is a learned, or rather artificiall declaracion of the mynde, in the handelyng of any cause, called in contencion, that maie through reason largely be discussed” (704). Ethos is very important to Wilson, though he discusses it only scantily. Wilson came from a middle-class family. He was, in a sense, writing from the margins. This was a time when language, not military prowess, could make a yeoman into a gentleman or cause a courtier to fall. Wilson’s emphasis on aptness and conciseness aims to win the audience’s confidence in the speaker’s honesty. He offers advice about “managing one’s language decorously” (“Renaissance Rhetoric” 699-700).

Francis Bacon (1561-1626) further complicates the early modern definition of rhetoric. He argued that rhetoric applies reason to the imagination to move the will. In the midst of the debate over whether rhetoricians distort the truth, Bacon claimed that “the villain is not rhetoric but ambiguity.” He did not agree with ornamental excesses, but neither did Erasmus or even Cicero. Bacon saw rhetoric as a serious art and a great responsibility because rhetoric “brings knowledge into play in the world.” He also realized that “sentences” and other commonplaces were not just for decoration, but they could be used as a means of investigating how language could shape knowledge that in

turn influences our beliefs and actions (738-39). Bacon, like Erasmus before him, opts for the middle road somewhere between Cicero and Ramus.

Discussions of seventeenth-century rhetoric sometimes exclude the rhetoric of the sermons.²² This is a serious omission, for religion was a part of everyday life during this period of time. Sermons were vehicles for political and social information and opinions. They were highly rhetorical performances (Armstrong 120). John Donne, as Dean of St Paul's Cathedral, often drew large, prestigious audiences. George Herbert, on the other hand, preached to a small congregation in Bemerton. Between 1559 and 1625, the ministry of the Church of England became a "graduate ministry," recruited from the Colleges of Oxford and Cambridge. Preachers developed their own form of rhetoric that mirrored classical rhetoric and departed from medieval traditions of preaching. Erasmus wrote rhetorical theory for the Christian preacher. Preachers should strive to receive divine help, but it did not hurt to have some practical training. Erasmus's *Ecclesiastes* outlines instructions for preachers and emphasizes the role of ethos: "We believe people whose heart, not their training, supplies their flow of words" (633). Erasmus departs from Luther and others by classifying sermons as *deliberative* rhetoric, designed to "move" the audience to action, rather than *epideictic* rhetoric of praise and blame.

In the *Art of Preaching* William Perkins included instructions for invention, arrangement, style, memory, and delivery, and yet he clearly advocates the plain style. Similar to Erasmus, he encourages dressing up or down language based on careful analysis of the audience, but he discourages Ciceronian forms of artificial memory as "dull-witted." The aim of preaching was to instruct and "enthrall" listeners through

²² For example, in *Rhetoric Retold*, Cheryl Glenn does not discuss sermons as a major genre of renaissance rhetoric

careful exposition of scripture. Preaching was an “engine to shake the foundations of ancient heresies.” For him, sermons were serious business, so he honed Ramus’s plain style for his purposes. I discuss the rhetoric of oral and print sermons in more detail in Chapter 5.

The bottom line is that seventeenth-century rhetoric is complex, and much of the rhetoric seems to be gleaned and modified from both Cicero and Ramus. New genres were emerging, such as the printed sermon and the essay. Authors began publishing a greater number of books in English, making them accessible to women. Women were beginning to appear as writers of some prose genres. The genres that have been most discussed by scholars are the poetical genres rather than prose genres; however, for the seventeenth-century reading public the new prose genres were more popular.

Seventeenth-Century Genres

During the seventeenth century, traditional genres were changing, and new genres were emerging. A newly literate reading public became consumers of books that appeared in a variety of genres. In *The Mothers Blessing*, Leigh explains that books help people “fashion” themselves. She writes, “Reading good books worketh a man’s heart to godliness. . . even as the fire warmeth the wax and maketh it to receive good *fashion*” (95). Recently, scholars have argued that genres are not simply “containers” or “tools.” Instead, genres “organize and generate texts and social actions in complex dynamic relation to one another” (Bawarshi and Reiff 7). Genres come with expectations, and the formal features are often “connected to social purposes and to ways of being and knowing in relationship to these purposes” (4). In the seventeenth century, genres such as the pamphlet generated contentious expectations. Others were considered

“disposable” literature. Still others were highly valued signs of piety. There has been very little research into the way that genres interact with one another (Dewit 16).

Seventeenth-century genres range from sermons to libels. During the early 1600s “low and high genres increasingly interact in shared formats and in often uncomfortable proximity within a shared market” (Rigney 199), and a rhetor could damage or build her ethos simply by her genre choice. In the Interchapter section I discuss seventeenth-century genres in more detail. Many of the genres are unfamiliar. For example, conduct manuals emerge against the backdrop of Protestantism, humanism, and the turmoil surrounding the approach of the English Civil Wars. Their authors sought to help individuals “fashion” themselves. Conduct manuals also provided content material for another type of genre in the form of commonplace books. Writers could transfer information from a conduct manual to a commonplace book. Commonplace books offered a physical “space” for individuals to record memorable quotations as well as to write their own responses. Pamphlets were generally argumentative, and a writer who wrote pamphlets could be viewed as contentious. Libels were disposable literature and not valued to the same extent as more substantial volumes. However, libels sometimes functioned as conduct manuals for the people who could not afford conduct manuals or sermons. Sermons were valued as essential for moral guidance and as outward signs of piety. Sermons and conduct manuals were deliberative by nature and as such they exhorted the audience to action.

Genres that had predictable features; however, even within genres, various divisions arose. Furthermore, genres could be restrictive, and as a general rule, women did not participate due to a lack of education and the stigma attached to publishing.

Seventeenth-Century Women's Rhetoric

In *The Mothers Blessing*, Leigh encourages both men and women, to write:

“book[s] unto [their] children, of the right and true way to happiness, which may remain with them and theirs for ever” (17). Publications by women in the seventeenth century, however, are scarce. Each contribution represents a triumph.

Probably the best known women writers of the seventeenth century were Mary Sidney Herbert, Mary Sidney Wroth, Elizabeth Faulkland Cary, and Catherine of Aragon (Glenn *Rhetoric Retold* 171). However, women were more often the subject of literature, rather than the producers of literature, and the literature written by men often depicts unruly, emotional women who disrupt the patriarchal hierarchy, as “masculine writers placed their versions of women on center stage.” Women’s voices, when we hear them at all, are often “dubbed” by male authors (136).

Additionally, few women wrote commonplace books. The active participation and commentary of the commonplace book writer provides epistemological information, as well as social and political insights. Ann Bowyer’s commonplace book, for example, reveals her knowledge of literature and rhetoric. It illustrates a young woman who was familiar with Chaucer’s *Wife of Bath*. This is an interesting selection for a young lady’s commonplace book. Also, Lady Dorothy Browne’s commonplace book shows a woman of strong intellectual ability who was selective in what she read and transcribed. Much of her writing reflected sermons she had attended. She was confident in adapting the teaching that she had received for her personal spiritual benefit. Her book was clearly more than simply an “aide-memoire.” It was a “space” for spiritual reflection, and it

afforded her a forum for articulating her religio-political ideas. It bears testimony to the “bright Coelestial Mind” that her family commemorated after her death (Bullard 121).

Women also reproduced, explicated, and amplified sermons. Sermons were highly rhetorical and often followed prescribed rhetorical methodology. William Perkins combined Ramus’s methods with Calvin’s theology (McKim 504). The methods of arrangement enhanced memory techniques for the audience. Women were encouraged to take notes and reproduce the sermons for their households and children; they were basically “preaching” sermons in their homes.

Women were also translating. Translations have often been ignored as sites of rhetoric. This is unfortunate because the translations often include insightful introductions and dedications. Also, translations can have a wide range of interpretive possibilities. They can be vehicles of political rhetoric depending on the sources or pieces that the translators choose. In 1550, for example, Lady Anne Cooke-Bacon chose to translate sermons from the Italian Calvinist Bernadine Ochine. In her preface to the “Christian reader,” she identifies herself as a well-occupied gentlewoman and a chaste maiden. Through her “travail” she offers the sermons in the English tongue. Instead of blushing at her own boldness, she addresses those who may criticize her for the handling of matters that they believe only doctors of divinity should address. She claims that those men who waste time by “womanishly” primping before mirrors and devising new fashions should blush. She accuses them of “warbling words” of scriptures and defacing those same words. She dedicates the translations to her mother, who often warned her about wasting her time learning the Italian language. She offers the translations to her mother as the “ful fruition of the fruits” of all of her studies (*Fouretene Sermons* 28).

The translations are evidence of the fruits of her mother's careful admonitions. Cooke-Bacon's writing illustrates her confidence in her own intellectual ability and in her topic. Her two sisters also translated material, including Greek and Roman texts. These kinds of rhetorical performances broaden our view of women as the translators and their contributions.

Moreover, some women wrote conduct manuals. One of the main concerns of the renaissance was authority, inside and outside of the home. Who has it? Who can use it? How does it transfer? What are the boundaries? All of these dilemmas are argued in conduct manuals. The mere existence of so much conduct literature suggests the possibility that women were not always staying within the boundaries that the authors believed they should. Interestingly, the early 1600s appears to be the right time for women to appear as authors of conduct manuals. For example, in 1604 Elizabeth Grymeston published *Moscelanea, Meditations, Memoratiues*, a conduct book that is a collection of prayers for her son to help him retain his Catholic faith. In 1616, Dorothy Leigh's *The Mothers Blessing* was published. In 1622 Elizabeth Jocelin's husband published *The Mothers Legacie, To her Vnborne Childe* after Jocelin died during the birth of her first child. In 1622, Lady Elizabeth Clinton published *The Countesse of Lincolnes Nurserie*, an advice book directed toward mothers, reminding them of their duty to breastfeed. In 1645, Elizabeth Richardson published *A Ladies Legacy to her Daughters*, which was a book of prayers for her daughters. It was carefully organized and circulated widely in manuscript form for many years before it was published.

Some of the less prestigious genres, especially writings that are in the lesser known genres that flourished during the early decades of the seventeenth century, have

been almost entirely ignored by researchers. However, those early years are important. Although Dorothy Leigh and King James did not know it, within a couple of decades after their conduct manuals were published, the world as they knew it would be “turned upside down” (Hill, *The World* 13).²³ Understanding the events *and published works* of those years is critical to interpreting the “greatest upheaval that has yet occurred in Britain,” namely the English Civil Wars (13). It is during these critical early decades of the seventeenth century that Dorothy Leigh published her conduct manual, *The Mother’s Blessing*. It was published in three times as many editions as James’s best-seller, and it was bound in three separate editions with an adapted version of King James’ *Basilikon Doron* (Gray 204). Although Leigh’s book was wildly successful, it has been mostly forgotten over time.

In this project, I argue that Leigh should be seen as a public figure whose career was eminently rhetorical and whose writing enriches our understanding of early seventeenth-century rhetoric. Throughout this dissertation, I turn to spatial terms to understand and discuss the complexities of genre and the tensions between public and private domains. Hovering over the entire project, however, is an investigation into the strategies that build positive ethos. I theorize that although ethos “dwells pervasively” in texts (Smith 14), some places are more conducive to ethos than others. Those “places” and “strategies” may be as effective for writers today as they were for Dorothy Leigh. Ethos catapulted Leigh’s writing from the private sphere into the middle of polemic debates. Ethos demanded that Leigh’s project transcend the boundaries and stigma of a print culture that excluded not only women but also individuals with limited educational and economic means. It is both profitable and possible to investigate how a person

²³ In this instance, I refer to the edition of James’s *Basilikon Doron*, which appeared in 1616.

succeeds at creating ethos (Aristotle 29). By creating trust with an audience, writers can access discourse that they or their audience perceive as being closed to them.

This project covers a relatively short number of years extending from the late 1500s until approximately 1650. It does not address continental debates. It is located firmly in England. It does not include a discussion of poetic or dramatic works, translations, or letter writing, other than cursory remarks. It focuses on the writing of an upper-class female writer and the audiences that could afford to consume her writing. This project theorizes about the relationships between genre and *space* and the high stakes of ethos for a woman with limited access to rhetorical resources.

Chapter Overviews

In Chapter 1, I reviewed historical content that directly relates to this project. Although the events are by no means comprehensive, they represent the concerns that this project reflects. I presented theories of seventeenth-century rhetoric, including some aspects of rhetoric that are usually excluded, such as the relationship between preaching and classic rhetoric and the complexities of sermons moving from oral performances to print performances. I note the relative absence of women in the print culture.

In Chapter 2, I explain my methodology and define terms as I use them in this project. Spatial rhetoric can be interpreted in several different ways. I explain how I understand *domestic space* and some of the complexities that accompany the notion of *home* in the early modern era. I discuss the importance of ethos and identify some of the major strategies for construction of ethos, including the rhetoric of silence and *motivational ethos*. I also offer an overview of several unfamiliar genres that appear throughout this project.

In Chapter 3, I summarize *The Mothers Blessing* and offer a review of current scholarship to date. I provide evidence of careful and thoughtful organization that supports the notion that her writing is not a deathbed performance. I pay particular attention to Chapter 32 in *The Mothers Blessing* because it functions as a turning point in the discourse, as well as a critical introduction to Leigh as a writer. I point out specific strategies that appear to build or augment ethos, including the composition of original narratives or exemplum.

At the conclusion of Chapter 3, I have included an interchapter section that provides background information and characteristics about prominent genres of the seventeenth century. The chapter illustrates the complexities and interactions of genres.

In Chapter 4, I place Leigh's writing in the context of social discourse about the role of women in general. I use Joseph Swetnam's pamphlet *The Araignment of Lewd, Froward, and Unconstant Women* as a representative text, and I trace Leigh's argument as she reacts against his claims and offers her own insight into the *quarrel des femmes*. I focus particularly on the positive ethos that Leigh establishes, especially in contrast with Swetnam. I contrast Swetnam's emotional outburst against Leigh's "carefull" arguments, theorizing that Leigh's strategic deployment of silence establishes a positive ethos that resounds with her early modern audience and represents a more accurate view than Swetnam's pamphlet does for the way society viewed women and their roles.

In Chapter 5, I place Leigh's writing in the context of political discourse. Here I do not focus on gender. Instead, I look at political concerns involving King James I. I use James's conduct manual *Basilikon Doron* as my comparison text. My purpose is to show that Leigh participated in the debates ranging from royal marriages to prodigality in

court. Although her book is bound in three editions with the adapted version of James's Basilikon *Doron*, Leigh is highly critical of contemporary royal practices and calls for reforms. In this chapter I call attention to original exemplum and scriptural references that relate to Leigh's political culture.

In Chapter 6, I place Leigh's writing in the context of religious discourse. This is significant as religion and politics were often inextricably connected. Leigh displays wisdom and selfless motivation that further establishes her credibility with her audience. Leigh participates in the discourse by taking on the role of "a man and a preacher" and writing her own sermon, joining in with other nonconforming, but non-separatists who were employing all of their persuasive might to enact reforms. It is my aim to illustrate that Leigh's "sermon" was just as well received, well written, and logically sound as any of the male-authored sermons. I seek to open questions about the printed sermon and its reception and effect on readers.

In Chapter 7, I argue for the importance of *endings* that meet the writers' *end* (purpose). *The Mothers Blessing* ends with an exhortation for her readers to "move the people." Leigh wants her readers to participate in public discourse. My end is to bring Leigh out the shadows of research and point to some fruitful areas for future research

CHAPTER 2

IDENTIFYING AND EVALUATING ETHOS

The early decades of the seventeenth century were filled with political and religious turmoil. Rhetoric provided a means for individuals to understand and address their changing world. Dorothy Leigh's *Mothers Blessing* participated in discourse that ranged across a wide span of topics, and it resounded with the early modern reading public. I want to know which early modern arguments Leigh engaged, how she approached them, and how or what she contributed.²⁴ In order to accomplish my goals, I need to place *The Mothers Blessing* in the company of contemporary books, and then I need to return to Leigh's writing and sort out my findings, focusing particularly on the way she established credibility with her audience.

My thesis is that Leigh is an active, articulate participant in some of the most polemic discourse of the early seventeenth century. Leigh should be seen as a public figure whose work is highly rhetorical.

My methodology for this project is first to select comparison texts for *The Mothers Blessing* that represent social, political, and religious discourse. After choosing a representative text from each of those discourse areas, I do a close reading of the primary texts, noting the arguments that Leigh engages, the methodology she uses to engage the topic or writer, and the contributions or contradictions she adds to the general argument. I then return to Leigh's text and identify her strategies and the formation of ethos. I theorize that mother-based ethos strategies ultimately insisted that her writing

²⁴ I acknowledge Quentin Skinner's influence on my methodology. He outlines similar goals and methodology in *Reason and Rhetoric in the Philosophy of Hobbes*. The introductory chapter was particularly helpful.

transcend perceived spatial and generic limitations in order to be included in early modern discourse.

The reader may well ask, however, about the value of my approach to the present case. I should like to outline three connected answers, each of which will be taken up at greater length in the body of this project. My first answer is that my methodology demands *dwelling* in Leigh's discourse. I discuss the concept of *dwelling* in a discourse in Chapter 3. Too often, Leigh is given cursory attention, passed over on the way to somewhere more important, or her writing is tossed into a pile with many other writers in order to establish a particular point. In contrast, I attempt to *dwell* in Leigh's writing long enough to feel comfortable and to interpret events and arguments that *she* chooses and develops—in the way that the early modern reading public may have interpreted them. By placing comparison texts side-by-side, I show how genres worked together or against one another, how they changed and developed, and how Leigh inhabits a genre. I try to understand where she is speaking *from* and how she creates trust with her readers and further enables her discourse.

Second, my methodology establishes a particular view of Leigh's intellectual development. Her prose is clear and direct. It is lively, readable, and creative. For example, in discussing how a man should choose a wife, Leigh writes:

Methinks I never saw a man shew a more senseless simplicity, then in misliking his owne choyse when God hath given a man almost a world of women to choose him a wife in. If a man hath not witte enough to choose him one, whome he can love to the end, yet me thinks he should have discretion to cover his own folly; but if he want discretion, me thinks hee should have policy, which never failes a

man to dissemble his own simplicities in this case. If he want wit, discretion and policy, he is unfit to marry any woman. (54)

One way to consider Leigh's intellectual development is to investigate the preface material, or *proem*. Leigh's preface is unique because it is written and signed by Leigh.²⁵ In early modern edited posthumous publications—especially in the case of female-authored texts—editors usually addressed the readers in order to explain the motivation for the publication. For example, in Elizabeth Jocelin's *The Mothers Legacy* (1622), her editor explains Jocelin's piety, and a comparison of the manuscript with the published work shows the editorial changes that Thomas Goad (her editor) made. Goad claims that Jocelin was educated in Latin and Greek (Teague 258). We have no evidence of Jocelin's Latin or Greek knowledge. We have only Goad's claim. No manuscript copy of Leigh's writing survives. However, Jocelin's writing is so similar to Leigh's that Jocelin and Leigh are often read in tandem.

If Jocelin knew Latin and Greek but offered no evidence of her knowledge, there is a possibility that Leigh had a similar knowledge. Both Leigh and Jocelin would have been aware that classical references in religious material were discouraged (Perkins *The Art of Propheying*). Also, women were discouraged from calling attention to their scholarly pursuits. The major difference between the Jocelin and Leigh is that Leigh admits that she intends to publish, and Jocelin states clearly that her writing was intended only for her unborn child. Leigh's preface exhibits her confidence, a trait that Quintilian

²⁵ Sometimes prefatory material would be edited to match the political mood, depending on what was considered seditious. By 1616 (and certainly later in the century), a dedication to Princess Elizabeth could have been considered seditious because there was much heated debate about the responsibility of England to assist Elizabeth and her husband in the religious wars on the continent. Interestingly, the dedication to Elizabeth is never omitted or changed, and Leigh's work shows no significant evidence of editing after the first edition.

claims helps to build ethos (418). Leigh's preface offers evidence of her intellectual development. She writes:

But when I had written these things unto you [my sons], and had, (as I thought) something fulfilled your Fathers request, yet I could not see to what purpose it should tend, unless it were sent abroad to you [i.e. published]; for should it be left with the eldest, it is likely the youngest should have but little part in it. Wherefore setting aside all fear, I have adventured to shew my imperfections to the view of the World, not regarding what censure shall for this be laid upon mee, so that herein I may shew my selfe a loving Mother, a dutifull Wife. (8)²⁶

Because there is no evidence of an editor, we have no one to tell us how highly educated she was, which contrasts to other female writers who had male editors to sing their intellectual praises for them. Instead, Leigh confidently announces her intention to publish her writing. Leigh's intellectual development mirrors Jocelin's intellectual development. If we know (because Goad tells us) that Jocelin learned Latin (Teague 258), then we may be correct in assuming that Leigh had a comparable education.

Finally, my methodology invites us to see Leigh's writing as moving beyond the conduct manual or "dying-parent legacy" genre. Leigh's writing is often interpreted as intimate motherly advice and as a deathbed performance (Becker 192).²⁷ I attempt to show that this interpretation is a mistake. It gives rise to an over-simplified interpretation. As such we may not realize what we actually have in our hands. Leigh's

²⁶ This "reason" for printing is odd. She had three sons, and copying a manuscript was not unusual. This "reason" indicates that she had other motivation for publishing. She probably wanted to reach a larger audience. There is no indication that she died before she could avail herself of the opportunity to publish her manuscript. Her reasons indicate that the publication was meant to take her place when she was no longer alive, but it also indicates that she intended for a wider public to read it.

²⁷ Lucinda M. Becker describes Jocelin's and Leigh's writing as characterized by "quiet desperation," trying to "cram a lifetime of mothering into just one piece of writing" (195). I disagree with this interpretation.

book is very much about living in her early modern world. A few researchers have claimed that Leigh's writing is "close to a sermon," but there has been no close reading for the generic markers of sermons in Leigh's writing.

My methodology is informed by genre theory, feminist studies, and spatial rhetoric. Because Leigh is often seen, when she is seen at all, as speaking from a domestic space, I need to investigate the complexities of domestic space as we perceive it from a twenty-first century point of view, as well as the way that Leigh's audience perceived it in the seventeenth century. Spatial theory provides a rich vocabulary for the discussion of ethos. Because seventeenth-century genres were changing, and because some genres have since changed, I spend considerable time in the Interchapter following Chapter 3 defining the genres that appear prominently in this project. First, however, I begin with an explanation of *space*.

Explaining Space

In the broadest sense, I understand *spatial rhetoric* to be location-based language used to describe discourse. The language may relate to any aspect of spatial location. I understand *rhetorical spaces* as "fictive but not fanciful or fixed locations whose (tacit, rarely spoken) territorial imperatives structure and limit the kinds of utterances that can be voiced within them" (Code ix). Increasingly, theorists are focusing on the importance of *space* and *place* in discourse. Although the definitions are slippery and a bit confusing, I define *place* as the material aspect of a thing and *space* as the more abstract concept that surrounds a thing. I view *public space* as a place or space where laws are debated and policy shaped, namely a *space* that includes a broad circulation of diverse material and that has been associated historically with males. I view *private space* as

more intimate and non-public. I see *domestic space* as a private space, one secluded from the public sphere and typically inhabited by women. I also use the terms *domestic space* and *domestic sphere* interchangeably and *public space* and *public sphere* interchangeably. Finally, I understand *domestic space* (along with all of the metaphorical symbolisms attached to it) as interchangeable with *home*.

In *Geographies of Writing*, Nedra Reynolds explains that *place* and *space* are intricately related. According to Reynolds, place is the easier concept to understand. It is the material aspect of a thing. She explains that place has a location. A person could follow directions on a map and locate a *place*. A place can be defined by people and events. Space, on the other hand, is not as easy to comprehend. Space is the conceptual notion. It is an abstract “realm of practices.” Place and space are intricately related. Places “become” spaces as people move through them and “dwell” in them (Reynolds 181). Reynolds explains, “In one sense, places are fixed positions on a map, and you can follow directions to get there. Space, if you will, structures our habitats but cannot be inhabited. Places touch people’s lives and evoke memories and emotions” (181). For example, my home could be considered a place. It has a location on a map, and a person could follow directions to arrive there. As my home becomes inhabited and associated with people and events, it evokes emotion. It remains a *place*, but it also becomes part of a metaphorical *domestic space* with symbolic meaning. *Home*, then, takes on a metaphorical dimension that extends beyond the material dwelling place.

Reynolds builds her theories of spatial rhetoric on the ideas of postmodern geographers Henri LeFebvre and Edward Soja. They reject binaries to discuss the complexities of space. Rather than dividing space into two categories, namely material

and metaphorical, they add another dimension, which Soja names *thirdspace*. According to Soja, the first space is the material aspect. The second space is the abstract or “perceived” space, and the *thirdspace* is the “conceived” space. He explains that *thirdspace* means “exploding or transgressing binaries”; it is the “intentionally incomplete, endlessly explorable” space that resists closure or “easy categorical definition” (35). In other words, *thirdspace* deals with a complex concept, including the realities of a lived space and the contradictions that are associated with it. To continue my previous analogy, my home is a *place*. The *place* is also a *domestic space* with symbolic meaning. However, my home may also have dimensions that extend beyond the traditional metaphorical notions. What really happens within my home may be different from what people perceive. Reynolds claims that *home* is a “complex set of between. . . a contested space” (153). In short, according to theorists, we can understand the notion of complex spaces, such as a *home*, more completely if we eschew binaries of physical and metaphorical space, and view complex metaphorical spaces, such as *home* as a *thirdspace*.

Nan Johnson argues that *home* has often been perceived as a confining space. Her study focuses on the role of the eighteenth-century conduct manual to perpetuate the patriarchal order of society. She claims that conduct manuals for *domestic space* enforced the patriarchal structure and relegated women to the *home*, rather than allowing them access to important public spaces where laws were made and nations changed. The conduct manual genre encouraged women to be silent and submissive. Johnson’s work is thorough and contains specific examples that illustrate her points. However, she does not consider that the relative silence found in domestic spaces may not always be

synonymous with submission. Johnson's discussion might be more comprehensive if she were to look *inside* the confining spaces to see what is going on within the spaces rather than focusing exclusively on ways to escape them. When one is "confined" inside boundaries, what are the options? Do all forms of power lie in the public space? She describes women as safe inside of their homes, "shutting the windows against controversy and change" (76). Are there alternate ways to conceive domestic spaces, confining as they were? Particularly, how did the successful women whom Johnson highlights navigate their way through those confining spaces?²⁸ Johnson theorizes that the spaces were constructed to maintain patriarchal order. She suggests that some women found ways to get around the boundaries, but she does not analyze specific strategies of the women who in fact found windows of opportunity.

The seventeenth century had its own way of viewing public and private spaces. It may surprise us to know that early modern writers devoted a good deal of time and energy to defining those same lines that Reynolds, Soja, and Johnson debate. It is tempting for us to think that times were simpler then and that perhaps spaces were more easily defined. That would be a mistake. Especially during a time when roles were evolving, people and places were "fashioning" themselves, and the lines between public and private spaces were beginning to evolve. During the early decades of the seventeenth century, some writers of conduct manuals were trying to *put* women into domestic

²⁸. One example that Nan Johnson highlights is Frances Willard in the early 1800s (See Nan Johnson 168). Johnson claims that because Willard was "bright in thought and wholesome in sentiment," she was able to "circumvent obstacles." Or closer to our time another example is Martin Luther King Jr. We often talk about the importance of ethos in conjunction with the other appeals when we discuss his letter from Birmingham Jail or his public speeches. His message resounded with his audience in spite of religious rhetoric, racial bias, or a number of other potential barriers.

spaces, not necessarily to *keep* them there (Sutherland 17).²⁹ I am not claiming that women and other groups of individuals had equal access to all rhetorical spaces prior to this time. I am simply stressing that the perception of domestic space has evolved over time, and the early decades of the seventeenth century represent a pivotal time. Ironically, things go downhill for women and many other disenfranchised groups during and after these years.

In the early decades of the seventeenth century, *home* was a complex place indeed. It is a place where Mother educates the children, where the “walls” talk, and where silent meditation leads to power. In Chapter 5, I describe *home* as Leigh references it. She refers to the Old Testament book of Habakkuk. In Habakkuk, the stones of the home “shout,” and the wood “answers.” The “very walls” testify against the inhabitants who gather idols to themselves and then brings the idols home to hide their idolatry. Also, one popular sermon describes the “woman of strength,” whose praise climbs up the walls of the home into “an open place” where her deeds are praised by the “assembly of the whole world” (Dod, *Bathshebaes Instructions* 77-78). *Home* is a place for essential silent reading and meditation, a place where one can “stay” and “keep oneself company” (Erasmus *Ecclesiastes* 627). The Word strengthens and empowers the reader. *Home*, as a conceived space, is more complicated in the seventeenth century than it is in the twenty-first century. It is ripe with rhetorical complexities that Leigh accesses to construct mother-based ethos.

Catharine Gray expresses the dangers of seeing public and private spaces as simple binaries that remained fixed over time. She argues that “the belief in the private as

²⁹ In the article “The Past and the Future” Christine Mason Sutherland makes a detailed argument showing that women during the Middle Ages had considerable power. The changes in power distribution began to take place in the fifteenth century. Humanism did not do much to help women (17).

constituting simply an emerging site of containment persists, and it persistently threatens to limit discussions of women writers and their relation to public life” (Gray, *Women Writers* 6). She further claims that to envision women as “excluded from public life and confined to a domestic realm retrospectively imposes a concept of the prison-house of privacy that does not account for women’s varied experiences in seventeenth-century society, or for women’s complex structural relation to seventeenth-century publicness” (7). Gray argues:

The neat, gendered division of public and private life also ignores the diversity of seventeenth-century women’s relations to public and private life in both practice and ideology: women played roles outside the home, and private relations in general were imbued with public meaning in this period—both by conservative conduct discourse and by the conflicting political communities that flourished in the Revolutionary Period. (7)

Likewise, Reynolds points out that the difference between public and private space is more complex than we like to think: “We talk about public and private as fixed states—because picturing them is easier so. They were in fact complex evolutionary chains” (22). These spatial theories provide a rich backdrop for my discussion of domestic space particularly as it affects Dorothy Leigh and her conduct manual. By acting in a culturally acceptable manner from within a particular space, Leigh builds credibility with her audience.

Building Ethos

Through *mother-based strategies*, she constructs ethos as Mother that cements the relationship between herself and her audience.

I use the term *strategy* in the sense that Julie Nelson Christoph has applied it. A *Strategy* represents a deliberate choice that a writer makes in any kind of writing situation. The term *strategy* works well because it describes the “contingent nature of subjectivity in that—unlike solid, stable subject positions—strategies exist within specific historical moments and may change from moment to moment” (669). Christoph also notes that *strategy* is an art of the strong. By using the term *strategy*, I would like to hold on to the notion that a *strategy* is something that a confident writer would conscientiously employ.

By *mother-based* strategies, I mean the strategic deployment of specific forms of persuasion that contribute to the writer’s credibility as *Mother*. I have identified three major strategies that Leigh uses to construct ethos. I call the three kinds of strategies *maternal motivation statements*, *maternal authority statements*, and *maternal domestic sphere statements*.

Maternal motivation statements are statements that indicate the writer’s motivation. Leigh builds ethos because readers are led to believe that she has goodwill toward them. Her motives appear to be to benefit others, not herself. She indicates that she is “troubled and wearied with feare lest [her sons] should not find the right way to heaven” (4). She explicitly refers to herself as a “fearefull, faithfull, and carefull” mother. These types of *maternal motivation statements* are not as straightforward as they appear. What does it mean to be “fearefull”? To be “fearefull” for a child’s spiritual well-being is different from being “fearefull” of storms, and yet Leigh uses “fearefull” in both of those senses. In Chapter 6, I discuss “fearefull” motivation as a mother-based ethos strategy.

By *maternal authority statements*, I mean statements that reference the authority of Mother. Leigh draws on the traditional authority that “mother” implies. I explain this concept and offer examples when I discuss the Nursing Mother trope in Chapter 4. The Nursing Mother image from the Old Testament provides a powerful exemplum for Leigh. Also, Leigh embodies the “new mother” of renaissance humanism who has a more pronounced duty to teach children and to function as a contributing partner in marriage.

And finally, by *maternal domestic sphere statements* I mean that Leigh draws on the complex domestic “space” of “home” as a source of mother-based ethos. By acting with decorum (as perceived by her audience) from within her domestic space, Leigh builds trust with her audience. Homes are places with doors and walls, often viewed as restrictive. Leigh defines her domestic space in a way that increases its value and her own value as an authority of that place. In Chapter 6, I offer an example of *home* as a speaking testament for a “woman of strength.”

Finding Ethos in Rhetorical Spaces

These maternal ethos strategies contribute to Leigh’s credibility. Although ethos “dwells” pervasively in texts, Cicero argues that the initial portion of the speech (*proem* or *exordium*) was the place to establish credibility with the audience (*De Oratore* 2.19.78-80).³⁰ In Chapter 5, I analyze the *exordium* or *proem* of both Dorothy Leigh’s *Mothers Blessing* and James’s *Basilikon Doron*, contrasting the appeals to trust and goodwill that each writer makes in the proem. The *proem*³¹ represents a space between the writer and the body of the text: a place to establish one’s motives and credibility. In

³⁰ I have converted the Roman numerals in Sutton’s translation to the more familiar standard numbering system.

³¹ I use the term *proem* rather than *exordium* throughout my discussion. As I understand them, the terms are interchangeable.

the proem, a rhetor often explains her or his motivation. Cicero indicates that the speaker's *motivation* is critical.

Even when a speaker is attempting to be witty, the speaker's motivation contributes to the construction of ethos. Low comedy and caricatures that orators present simply "for their own sakes" are "not at all [Cicero's] kind." Instead, the orators resemble buffoons (2.62.252). In Chapter 4, I contrast Swetnam's wittiness with Leigh's sincerity. Cicero stresses that nothing is more desirable than dignity in an advisory speech. Ultimately, he sums up his own aims as an orator: "In short, the whole of my efforts are always regularly devoted to this—for I will go on repeating it—if possible to do some good by speaking, or if that is not possible, at all events not to do any harm (2.76.306). This kind of motivation, I argue, inspires trust in the audience.

Quintilian claims that "unless he be good, [a man] can never be a orator." Like the Aristotelian speaker, he must have gained a deep insight into the impulses of human nature and formed his moral character on the precepts of others and on his own reflections (2.4). The most important of all qualities is "steady presence of mind, which fear cannot shake or clamour intimidate" (5.2). Faults of "presumption, temerity, audacity, and arrogance, are in the highest degree offensive yet without proper firmness, confidence, and courage, neither art nor study, nor knowledge would be the least avail" (5.2). According to Quintilian, morally bad people lack proper moral knowledge and prudence. In this way, Quintilian mirrors Augustine, who stresses that a person must have a certain degree of piety in order to build credibility with the audience. The speaker must be a good person *before* the process begins.

Michael Hyde claims that the rhetor's conscience will call for her or him to create a comfortable place and invite others into that place where they will feel "at home" as they consider and discuss the truth of some matter that the rhetor/architect has attempted to create (xxi). The words *comfortable* and *at home* lead me to associate these places with domestic spaces. This prompts me to look for ethos in *private* spaces. Similar to Hyde, Craig Smith argues that ethos is a "space," even a "contested space," not a vague category to fill up at some specific point in a speech. Ethos cannot be dissected from a speech. It is the speech. He argues, "[Ethos] permeates the speech as it is mingled with other proofs, most notable word choice, enthymemes, and narration" (14).

Nedra Reynolds claims that "homes embody issues of class, in the ways they are arranged or decorated or by the smells coming from the kitchen," and that "all really inhabited space bears the essence of the notion of home" (153). She claims that we cannot separate ourselves from home, even when we move into public spaces. She explains that the "notion of home follows us, in a sense, into other places and spaces" (155). Reynolds notes that contemporary rhetors—in academic journals, on blogs, during arguments of all sorts—frequently "inscribe *who* they are by showing *where* they are" (325). She finds ethos "positioned precisely in the space between public meanings and private selves where writers struggle to identify their own positions at the intersections of various communities and attempt to establish authority for themselves and their claims" (333).

In similar fashion, Risa Applegarth argues that location-based strategies *within a certain genre* lead to ethos. She establishes a "flexible formulation of ethos that can account for how rhetors claim public space for their arguments through self-portrayals

that locate their performances in relation to particular material locations and among genres” (“Genre, Location” 44). Applegarth claims that ethos is a situated practice, “neither fully and freely chosen nor yet thoroughly determined, but shaped through the interaction between individual rhetors and the social and material environments within which they speak” (49).

So far, these theories have addressed ethos as the result of spoken or written language. Another way to see the construction of ethos, however, is through the deployment of “silence.”

Listening for Silence

I understand silence in two ways. First, I see silence as the absence of speech. However, the absence of speech can be interpreted as a deliberate rhetorical strategy. Several recent theories influence my interpretations of silence. In *Unspoken*, Cheryl Glenn asks, “What if delivery is silence, silence, silence?” She argues that silence is a form of rhetoric and action (156). Silence is a non-traditional rhetorical space (for Western culture).³² It is a space where rhetors are not participating in the “traditional rhetorical discipline of combat and dominance” (157). Like speech, the meaning of silence depends on a “power differential that exists in every rhetorical situation: who can speak, who must remain silent, who listens, and what those listeners can do” (9). Also, Glen reminds future researchers that there is much to learn about woman’s and man’s delivery of silence. We should pay careful attention to “the power of conscientious speaking out and of silence, about power and control, and especially about who remains

³² See Kalamaris *Reclaiming the Tacit Dimension* for a discussion of the ways in which Western culture views silence. He compares Eastern ideology. He claims that feminists, particularly, are not taking advantage of the rhetoric of silence because they view silence as something to overcome, to fight against, rather than investigating “natural” silences, those silent spaces that are chosen by the rhetor.

silent and who silences” (19). In chapter 4, I argue that Leigh chooses to deploy silence by not acknowledging her rhetorical opponent (Swetnam) by name.

Similarly, in “*A Moving Rhetoricke: Gender and Silence in Early Modern England*,” Christine Luckyj offers examples of writers who deploy silence in ways that are eloquent, subversive, smart, powerful—and moving. Like Glenn, she argues that silence has often been seen as “vacancy, death itself—the hated antithesis of consciousness, freedom, presence” (3). She claims that the most productive way to overcome this type of misguided interpretation lies in a thorough investigation of the philosophical and political history of silence in Western thought and of its strategic deployment by early modern authors (6). Silence, as a rhetorical trope, needs to be interpreted because it can be a site of resistance, especially in times of political and social upheaval (15). Western thought also views silence as non-argumentative rhetoric, so we need to do some cultural (re)positioning of our own in order to interpret silences in early modern times.

In addition to Glenn and Luckyj, in “A Good (Wo)man Skilled in Speaking,” Tita French Baumlin connects renaissance self-fashioning to ethos. As writers in early modern times “self-fashioned” themselves, they often assumed a persona or did some “strategic cultural positioning.” Baumlin notes that this fashioning or positioning complicates the issue of ethos and creates difficulty for us as we attempt to decipher the posturing.³³ Leigh claims to “forget herself” in her concern for her children—and for others. She also assumes the persona of a “man and a preacher” (page). By “forgetting herself” and becoming “a man and a preacher” Leigh can remain silent and allow the the persona to speak for her, but the silent space has become complex.

³³ See also Elizabeth D. Harvey’s *Ventriloquized Voices: Feminist Theory and English Renaissance Texts*. for a discussion of women who assume various personas.

Ultimately, Baumlin notes that traditionally feminine *ethos* is silence. Henry Smith, the “silver-tongued” and renowned preacher claims that “the ornament of woman is silence” (qtd. in Baumlin 9). Richard Brathwait advises men to choose a wife by his “eares”³⁴ and not by his “eyes.” However, he also claims that silence can be a “moving rhetoric.” In *English Gentlewoman*, Brathwait writes:

Your Ladship hath forgot your selfe; Women should be no Speakers in the Church. In one word, as modesty gives the best grace to your behavior, so moderation of Speech to your discourse. Silence in a Woman is a moving Rhetoricke, winning most, when in words it wooeth least. Now give Speech and Silence their distinct attributes or personall Characters: wee may gather their several tempers by the several effects derived from them. More shall we see fall into sinn by Speech than Silence. (20)

Investigating silent spaces becomes an important activity in discussions about ethos, but it also presents fairly new methodological concerns. How does one approach silent spaces?

In Chapter 4, I identify instances of Leigh’s engagement with Joseph Swetnam’s culturally disruptive pamphlet, *The Araignment of the Lewd, Idle, Froward, and Inconstant Woman* (1615). Although Leigh directly engages his claims, she never mentions his name. In that regard, she is silent. However, I point out that because of the extreme popularity of both texts, the “turned” phrases, and the shared features, audiences could not help but make strong connections between both texts. Leigh’s mother-based ethos is augmented by a sense of logic, as in her reasoning:

³⁴ I acknowledge John Bowers for suggesting that this may be a potential pun on “ears” and “arse” as in Chaucer.

but see how soone the Diuel will lay a snare to entangle thee withal, that thou maist be idle . . . for many desire goods, that they may bee idle, and the Divell hath the most leisure to talke with a man, when he is idle; and idleness bringeth a man to manie vaine recreations, and so to much eating and drinking, and to manie wicked sinnes. (219).

She never descends into the carnivalesque and contentious mire of the pamphlet genre. Her prudent deployment of silence and logic in the face of Swetnam's emotional wittiness helps her maintain print chastity in a society that would quickly label a public-speaking woman as a scold. The act of writing offered Leigh a private space for the production and consumption of her arguments. It was a space where she could be silent and yet speak. Her choice of rhetorical silent spaces places her on higher moral ground than Swetnam. I argue in Chapter 4 that Leigh should be seen as one of the first responders to Swetnam's pamphlet.

In this project, silence evolves from piety and self-control. Silence is associated with wisdom, with being "still" and meditative. In the early modern sense of the word, silence was often admired and ungendered. In *A Direction for the Government of the Tongue According to Gods Word* (1597), William Perkins claims that "the gouernment of the tongue containeth two parts: Holy speech, and holy silence" (7). In his sermon, Perkins does not single out women. Both men and women have the same responsibility to be moderate in speaking and prudent in silence. Perkins claims that "wordes take vertue from the speaker" (26). Surprisingly, this offers a more balanced view than literature that constantly focuses on the woman and her "unruly" tongue. Without

minimizing the existence of such misogynistic literature, we should also acknowledge that texts such as Perkins's were well received.

Death creates a final silence that usually increases the value of the written production. In this case, I refer to the *literal* death of the author.³⁵ One preface epistle to an audience at the Globe theater suggested, "and believe this, that when he [Shakespeare] is gone, and his comedies out of sale, you will scramble for them, and set up a new English Inquisition" (qtd. in Pendergast 501). The author of the epistle suggests that Shakespeare's death will increase the value of his comedies. Because of the limited quantity, the value increases. That is to say that ethos is affected by the law of supply and demand. In addition to increasing the value of the author's text, the final silence of death can seal the virtue of a person's life. If a person has lived an exemplary life (as was claimed in several of the funeral sermons preached for women in the early 1600s), then the person has finished his or her last earthly battle, fought the good fight so to speak, and is now beyond reproach. Death can also provide evidence of a writer's true motivation. If there is no chance of monetary gain or fame, then the person may have had other reasons for her publishing books. Christine Mason Sutherland has argued:

[T]oo often we assume that the motivation of any woman writer of the past was to be heard: to raise her own voice, to be listened to, to be taken seriously, for herself. It is true that there have been women in the past who did want just that. . . . Mary Astell, however, and many other seventeenth-century women were very differently motivated. For most of them, I would contend, the motivation for writing was not to have their voices heard; it was not recognition of themselves as

³⁵ This is the opposite stance that Roland Barthes takes in his famous 1967 essay. Barthes argues for the separation of the identity of the author from the text. I am arguing for the merging of the author's identity with the text, especially after the literal death of the author.

individuals; it was not even the quest for personal freedom for its own sake. It was the desire to serve. (20)

Sutherland encourages researchers to consider the motivation of the writer. Mary Astell wrote in the latter part of the seventeenth century, after the English Civil Wars, and approximately sixty years after *The Mothers Blessing* was published. George Herbert is another example of someone who “wished to accept no credit for any achievement in this life” (Wall 5). Herbert sent his “little book” with instructions to his friend Nicholas Ferrar to publish the book “if he can think it may turn to the advantage of any dejected poor Soul” (qtd. in Wall 14) That “little Book” was *The Temple*, a collection of Herbert’s poetry, published in 1633 shortly after his death. *The Temple* was probably more valuable because of the silence that Herbert’s death created.³⁶ In the article “Cicero, Ambrose, and Aquinas ‘On Duties’ or the Limits of Genre on Morals,” Mark Jordan points out that motivation is critical to the establishment of ethos, particularly in religious discourse. The motivation, then, appears to cement ethos. Motivation is not always easy to infer, but when the writer expresses motivation, we might want to look at it. Granted, motivation in the seventeenth century can be confusing because of the dedications and ostentatious reasons for being pushed into the print world. In Chapter 3, I argue that Leigh’s motivation, similar to Herbert’s, “gained for [her] an authority in speech that only personal integrity can provide” (Wall 3).

³⁶ Herbert’s *The Temple* was well received by the public. It is one of the books in appear in Lady Anne Clifford’s *Great Portrait*, along with Montaigne’s *Essais* and the works of Chaucer. (See Snook *Women, Beauty and Power* 163). This indicates that Herbert’s book was highly valued for its literary contributions within a relatively short time of his death. Herbert was friends with John Donne and Lancelot Andrews, and he was an orator at Cambridge. However, he became disillusioned with Parliament in 1624 and abandoned the Court for a parsonage far from London, in Bemerton, where he stayed until his death in 1633. For a more detailed account of Herbert’s life see Wall’s introduction to *George Herbert The Country Parson, The Temple*. I find many similarities in topic, theme, tone, and attitude between Dorothy Leigh and George Herbert, both in Herbert’s poetry and in his conduct manual for preachers, *The Country Parson*.

The theories that I have discussed invite me to see silence, especially deployed by a mother, as an avenue to ethos. Looking at silence as a form of *maternal motivation statement* that constructs ethos is important because it helps me understand how individuals found ways to access discourse through silence. No matter how oppressed an individual may be, that person has the power to be silent—about what to say, whom to address, what *not* to say, *where* not to say it, and even how to send up the silence. Perhaps we have looked too long for silences in order to “fill” them. Genre is another concept that we sometimes think of as a container to be “filled.”

Defining Genre

Over the past few decades, research has reinvigorated our understanding of genre by seeing genre as more than a tool, container, or “formulaic writing” (Bawashi and Reiff 7). Anis Bawarshi and Mary Jo Reiff associate genre with social actions. In other words, genre is a “way of interacting within recurring situations” (9). The key term here, for my purposes, is *interacting*. Bawarshi and Reiff argue that the formal features of genres are connected to social purposes and to ways that a writer views herself and her purpose for writing (4). It is a mistake to separate *form* from content because genre is much more than some type of universal category that houses a ready-made and independent discourse (17). Bawarshi and Reiff reference Bakhtin, who defined *utterance* as an incomplete thought that is related to other utterances, as compared to a *sentence*, which can stand independently of other sentences. Bawarshi and Reiff argue that genre is an “utterance,” dialogically related to other utterances (231).

Similarly, Carolyn Miller points out that genres often change because of the writers and situations that inhabit them. In this way, genres are productive spaces to

investigate rhetorical strategies. Writers encounter situations and respond (67). Amy Devitt agrees with Miller and notes that genres are sites for conflict. Devitt calls for more investigation into the process rather than the product of genres. For Devitt, what is happening within the boundaries of the genre is more important than what the final product looks like. She also suggests more research into the ways that genres interact with one another. She notes that in loosely structured genres, writers push boundaries as the genre seeks to enforce patriarchal boundaries (16).

In contrast to loosely structured genres, some genres have highly prescriptive rules and sharply defined characteristics. Malcolm Richardson studied medieval business letter-writing practices. He found that because the genres were so prescriptive, all writers assumed a male persona (even a bossy tone), and the gender of the writer was indistinguishable. Female-authored business letters, therefore, were indistinguishable from the male-authored business-letters. My point is that some genres invited debate, conflict, and change more than other genres. The business letter genre has remained fairly consistent over the centuries, and gendered voices are neutered. That genre is tightly structured. Any deviation from the standard form probably came about in spoken message that often accompanied the letter. In Chapter 6, I point out that the early modern Puritan sermon was a tightly structured genre, and when Leigh participates in that genre, her writing is ungendered. Genres with loose boundaries invited more debate. The business letter genre, for example, is an example of a first-space genre—not gendered. More loosely constructed genres invite *thirdspace* critique. The sermon genre, as a general rule, is a tightly structured genre. The conduct manual, by way of contrast, is a loosely structured genre. The seventeenth century was notorious for combining genre

(Woodbridge 67). Leigh combines the conduct manual genre and the sermon genre, illustrating a complex *thirdspace* within the conduct manual genre.

Mark Jordan takes the notion of genre as a social space one step farther by envisioning genre as a stage. He defines genre as “a set of pedagogical relations beneath the surface disposition.” He clarifies his definition by describing genre as “a performance with stage, script, and audience” (500). He complains that we too often boil our discussions of genre down to a range of textual features and responses rather than focusing on the features and responses that have to do with rhetorical relations, namely speaker or writer, message, and audience. He suggests that we look for “drama” in genre.³⁷ Who are the actors? Who is the audience? What is the message? How is the communication staged? Jordan suggests that these queries can be answered by viewing genre as a staged performance. This could be a particularly insightful way to see genre during times of social upheaval or change. In Chapter 3, I argue that Leigh takes on the persona of a “man and a preacher” in order to deliver a sermon.

And finally, Risa Applegarth has recently argued that genre is a space, but it is also a space that is understood by “inflections from economics.” Genre values can be manipulated based on artificial economic principles. She explains the way she views rhetorical scarcity. She explains:

The concept of rhetorical scarcity prompts scholars to ask how the direction of genre change can be manipulated to manufacture scarcity out of resources that are not inherently limited. In the ecological register, *scarcity* reminds us that rhetorical resources flow less easily into and out of a space with less permeable

³⁷ Cheryl Gleen and Jessica Enoch also suggest that researchers approach texts as “dramatic” productions. In “Drama in the Archives: Rereading Methods, Rewriting History,” they suggest that in order to recreate a “rhetorical moment,” researchers should cast the rhetors as actors on the stage (321).

boundaries. In contrast, an environment that is loosely bounded or expansively defined is likely to make a greater variety of rhetorical resources available to practitioners. (“Spatial and Economic Inflections” 475)

Her theory of “economic scarcity” places genre in a social category regulated by laws of supply and demand and ultimately by *authority*. It invites us to “historicize” genres rather than seeing them as naturally evolving because “scarcity and value can be artificially manipulated” (475). Genres can be exclusive, and certain genres are sometimes granted a more prestigious and exclusive value than other genres. In Chapter 5, for example, we see the high value placed on the “occasional” printed sermon as an outward sign of inward piety (McCullough, “John Donne’s Sermon” 213). The printed sermon genre excluded women, but here is where the generic ground gets slippery. In Chapter 5, I show how genres with the most formulaic features were genderless. I argue that Leigh’s *Blessing* is not, as Gray claims, “as close to sermonizing as a woman could get at this early stage in the seventeenth century” (50). It *is* a sermon. As an author, Leigh augments her maternal authority by associating with the learned clergy of the early seventeenth century.³⁸

Genre was the vehicle of delivery, and some genres enjoyed a highly social value, while others were considered “literary bastards” (Bellamy 113). A number of the genres that flourished during the seventeenth century have changed or no longer exist. In order to understand Leigh’s writing, we need to understand genre, not so that we can categorize, but because “genre shapes the form and content of texts, and it influences the

³⁸ Patrick Collinson (*The Religion of Protestants*) notes that the years between 1559 and 1625 were years of dramatic change in the Protestant ministry (96). The clergy became more educated, and by the 1620s Puritanism was considered a socially respectable movement with deep roots and leaders among the town’s elite (149).

questions we ask of the past. . . . It excavates historical power structures and sheds light on the core values of early modern England” (Heller, *The Mother’s Legacy* 916). My methodology requires a familiarity with seventeenth-century genres that are no longer familiar to us. In the Interchapter that follows Chapter 3, I discuss seventeenth-century genre in greater detail. However, before that I would like us to become more comfortable in *The Mothers Blessing*.

CHAPTER 3

MAKING OURSELVES AT HOME IN *THE MOTHERS BLESSING*

Live godlily and patiently in your house. (Leigh 122)

The Mothers Blessing is situated in the domestic sphere. Unfortunately, *The Mothers Blessing* is unfamiliar territory, even to early modern scholars. My goal in this chapter is to *dwell* in *The Mothers Blessing*, to begin to feel at home and to identify and analyze mother-based ethos as we encounter it. Because *The Mothers Blessing* emanates from a domestic space, spatial rhetoric offers appropriate vocabulary to articulate the complexities we encounter in unfamiliar territory.

According to Nedra Reynolds, discourse can be inhabited. It may not have walls and doors, but it can be a complex space where we can go and dwell. *Dwelling* means to stay awhile, to become so comfortable that we can find our way around “in the dark” so to speak. In other words, *discourse* is a complex rhetorical *space* (163). Reynolds claims *dwelling* as a rich metaphor for interpreting texts: “*Dwelling* in a discourse is an act performed in the material world. . . but one that demands our full metaphorical imagination. . . .[Dwelling] transforms another person’s property into a space borrowed for a moment by a transient” (163). It requires us to be open to differences that we encounter as we learn to *dwell* in a particular discourse. With time and effort, we can *dwell* in a *discourse*.

Ethos can also *dwell* in a discourse. Craig Smith has recently argued that *ethos* is not found in only one particular location in a discourse (5). *Ethos* “dwells pervasively.” By that, Smith means that *ethos*, either noble or ignoble, is always present.

This chapter is important to my project for several reasons. First, Leigh’s writing is basically unknown. Leigh deserves a space of her own. I attempt to give her that

space in this chapter so that we can begin to feel comfortable understanding and interpreting her writing. In addition, the few commentators who discuss her writing often do so piecemeal, sometimes with a twenty-first century feminist agenda in mind. Or, they do not stay long enough in *The Mothers Blessing* to understand it in its entirety. They sometimes ignore huge sections of the book. This chapter summarizes the entire *Mothers Blessing*. Finally, this chapter is important because it builds on the previous scholarship that has dichotomized interpretations of Leigh into “two” ways of seeing Leigh. I aim to complicate that dichotomy.

In order to reach my goals, I review the current scholarship regarding *The Mothers Blessing*. Then I offer a summary of *The Mothers Blessing*. As part of my summary, I pay particular attention to Chapter 32, which I view as a major turning point in Leigh’s discourse, as well as an identification marker for her as an author. I theorize about *what* she is doing with the text and *why* she is doing it. I point out significant mother-based *ethos* strategies wherever I encounter them within the context of the discussion. I argue that if we feel comfortable at any point in *The Mothers Blessing*, it is probably due to Leigh’s successful construction of ethos.

Literature Review for *The Mothers Blessing*

In “The New Mother of the English Renaissance” Betty Travitsky makes one of the first critical references to Dorothy Leigh’s writing. In 1980, she describes Leigh as “a woman unknown outside [of Travitsky’s critical essay]” (38). In the past three decades, Leigh has appeared in perhaps a dozen critical articles, in chapters of a few books, and in just over a dozen dissertations.³⁹ There is no book-length study dedicated to Dorothy

³⁹ A search of the Proquest databases provides evidence of approximately fifteen dissertations that feature Dorothy Leigh. Michael Dowd has included a relatively in-depth analysis of Leigh’s contribution to

Leigh or her writing. Critics usually view Leigh's writing in one of two ways. They see it as business-as-usual or as mildly seditious.

The first way to look at Leigh's *Blessing* is to see this book as *business-as-usual*. This view approaches Leigh's writing as typical of the domestic advice genre in the early seventeenth century. It is a book that offers maternal advice, including the choice of a wife, naming of children, and the governing of servants. Critics who place Leigh's writing in the category of domestic or familial literature include Valerie Wayne, Charlotte Otten, and Betty Travitsky.⁴⁰ Otten includes Leigh in a chapter on "Women Writing about Love and Marriage" (168-72); Wayne sees *The Mothers Blessing* as concerned with issues of private piety, moral conduct, and authority within the family (56-79); Travitsky places an excerpt from Leigh in the chapter of "Familial and Personal Writings" (55-57). Even though these scholars view Leigh's work as business-as-usual, they contribute to the body of literature that rescues, recovers, and reinstates Leigh's writing as important to the history of rhetoric. They portray Leigh as the "new mother" of the renaissance, a woman whose duty extends beyond being "chaste, silent, and obedient."

The second way to look at Leigh's writing is to see it as reaching beyond the boundaries of conduct manual genre. There are principally three scholars who have gone a long way toward elevating Leigh out of footnote status, as well as moving her outside of the business-as-usual tradition: Catharine Gray, Edith Snook, and Jennifer Heller.

pedagogical practices in the early seventeenth century. Jennifer Heller's book is the most recent publication. It provides excellent information into the importance of understanding genre in the final chapter "Conclusion: Gender, Genre, and Legacy" (193-196).

⁴⁰ See Charlotte Otten's *English Women's Voices, 1540-1700*; Valerie Wayne's "Advice for Women from Mothers and Patriarchs" in *Women and Literature in Britain, 1500-1700*; and Betty Travitsky's *The Paradise of Women: Writings of English Women of the Renaissance*.

Gray and Snook both devote a book chapter to Dorothy Leigh. Heller devotes portions of several chapters to Leigh's writing. All three authors credit Leigh as a contributor to political and social debates. They see Leigh's writing as ambiguous and contradictory at times and note that is not always patriarchal in structure.

This relatively new way to view Leigh's text requires us to look at the "ambiguities and contradictions. . . critiquing an oversimplified view of women's subservience to familial patriarchal authority" (Gray, *Women Writers* 39). Gray argues that one cannot "divorce" these ambiguities from the context. This means that we need to carefully reconstruct the rhetorical situation and the events that prompted and enabled this type of rhetorical practice. In *Women Writers and Public Debate in 17th-Century Britain*, Gray devotes the chapter "The Zealous Mother" to Leigh's engagement to the writings of King James, especially *The Fathers Blessing*, an anonymously authored adaptation of James's conduct manual *Basilikon Doron* (or *The Royal Gift*). She argues that Leigh "politicizes motherhood in an extended critique of Jacobean power and politics" and claims that Leigh helped to create an "emergent counterpublic" that continued after the initial publication (39).

Gray claims that "Leigh's deployment of maternity as a political figure to self-consciously engage controversial projects of religious and social dissent still goes unexplored" (*Women Writers* 39). Although Gray makes progress toward extending the interpretation of Leigh's writing beyond domestic advice, her stance is curiously cautious. Gray claims that although Leigh's critique is moderate, it presents a different version of what is going on in English society than does James (59). Ultimately, Gray sees Leigh as offering mild dissent and perhaps unconsciously influencing a more open

form of dissent in later writers. Gray interprets Leigh's writing as more than simply domestic advice. In Chapter 5, I discuss Leigh's interaction with James's writing in greater detail.

Edith Snook in *Women, Reading, and the Cultural Politics of Early Modern England* includes a chapter "Dorothy Leigh: The 'Labourous Bee' and the Work of Literacy in Seventeenth-Century England." Snook claims that Leigh advocates reading practices that have political implications. By encouraging the uneducated public to read and interpret the Bible for themselves, Leigh encourages an activity that James actively sought to curtail. Individuals were reading the Geneva Bible (1582), which had marginal notes about tyrants and the authority of kings (Daniell 294). James found the marginal notes highly seditious. He is said to have commented that he "could never yet see a Bible well translated in English; but the worst of all [James] thought the Geneva to be (qtd. in Daniell 433).⁴¹

Snook investigates the political implications of reading practices in early modern England. She is interested in how the maternal voice is politicized on the issue of vernacular reading in *The Mothers Blessing*. Snook considers the maternal voice as "capable of engaging contentious religio-political issues from outside the realm of politicized public authority," and she accuses Leigh of navigating the mother's role of reading instructor "into political territory" (58). She argues that "women participated more fully in forming the culture of reading than we have yet imagined" (59).

⁴¹ David Daniell claims that the publication of the King James Version of 1611 was a political act by reactionary bishops against the Geneva editions of the Bible. The Geneva Bible was "the Bible of the Elizabethan and Jacobean poets and prose writers, including Shakespeare" (205). It was the "Bible of the English" (205).

Her point is that *what* and *how* an individual reads constitutes a potential political statement. The maternal figure often directed other individuals' reading habits and thus incited polemic activity, especially by encouraging Bible reading. Snook argues that women contributed more actively to the reading practices of early modern England than we have previously considered. However, she provides limited specific examples of the effects of these reading practices. The purpose of my project is to carry Snook's efforts a step further by pointing to specific instances of polemic debate that Leigh engages in *The Mothers Blessing* and also by identifying the maternal strategies that she employs.

In *The Mother's Legacy in Early Modern England*, Jennifer Heller argues that Leigh produces a specific type of conduct manual, namely a mother's legacy. Leigh appears in several sections of Heller's book, where Heller notes with interest Leigh's uniqueness when contrasted with other mother's legacy writers. Leigh appears most prominently in the chapter "Religion and Reform, 1603-1623." Heller claims that using genre as a lens to view early modern writers helps us formulate questions and excavate power structures that enlighten the core values of early modern England (196). By 1620, the mother's legacy had established a set of expectations, and a writer's genre choice could help us see how the writer viewed herself in society (182). Heller identifies Leigh's unusual emphasis on private prayer as a challenge to the centrality of the pulpit. She also points to Leigh's emphasis on public worship and Sabbath practices as polemic (106).

In light of the theories presented by these scholars, we can see Leigh as business-as-usual or as contributing to a more complex political, social, and religious discourse. Christine Luckyj offers an additional suggestion for approaching early modern women

writers. Luckyj encourages us to reexamine many of the texts written by early modern women. She argues that domestic advice books written by males are often interpreted as highly politicized (“A Mouzell” 129). However, Luckyj points out that those same interpretations are not extended to female authors. Luckyj claims that scholars recognize that the male-authored conduct manual genre often exposed debates about the monarchy’s authority, but women writers who discuss identical themes do not merit similar interpretations. She questions why this is the case. She argues:

If we assume that a woman writing about marriage must have a personal stake in the domestic genre, we are not far away from the misogynist commentator who mocked Speght. If we assume that a woman using religious language must be using it against and differently from men, we are replicating the notion that female authors were both isolated and defined entirely by their gender. There is an irony here. . . .While Rachel Speght’s *Mouzell for Melastomus* has itself been thoroughly recovered and anthologized, its full historical meaning may have been erased.” (“A Mouzell” 130)

Luckyj’s argument is important because it identifies the double standard critics sometimes employ in responding to texts. It also points out the dangers of focusing exclusively on gender, and it also identifies conduct manuals as sites of sedition.⁴²

Initially, Leigh’s writing was categorized by researchers as intimate advice given by an early modern mother to her three sons. Increasingly, researchers are moving away from that limited interpretation to a more comprehensive view that includes strong evidence of Leigh’s involvement in social, political, and religious discourse.

⁴²Belenda Peters claims that “in the early decades of the seventeenth century, a household guide was as much political tract as domestic advice book” and that historians are likely to find as much information about “kingship” as they do about “authority of husbands” in the pages of conduct manuals (6).

Summary and Analysis of *The Mothers Blessing*

The Mother's Blessing is not the publication of a mother's manuscript that has been tucked away in some drawer waiting for someone—usually a male—to find it and publish it. Instead, it shows evidence of careful planning and intentional publication. Yovonne Day Merrill points out that writers who do not use transitions cannot establish hierarchical reasoning very well. One of the most noticeable characteristics of inexperienced writers even today is their failure to use such transitional expressions or recognize hierarchical relationships between ideas (183).⁴³ Leigh provides transitions between her chapters. For example, at the end of a chapter about prayer, she writes, “Therefore, if you would alwise have [prayer], you must alwise use it, and then you will bee humbly, faithfully, & familiarly acquainted with God” (107). She begins the next chapter with “Oh heavenly and happy acquaintance! For the longer thou usest it, the stronger will be thy faith, the humbler thy heart, the earnestest thy zeal, & the holier thy life” (108). Transitions in the early chapters are especially effective because they connect the early, short chapters. Because they are so short, the early chapters risk appearing choppy or haphazard, perhaps like a disorganized commonplace book. However, Leigh's carefully crafted transitions give her early chapters a strong sense of coherency.

In the *proem*, or *exordium*, Leigh explains her reasons for publishing. Her main reasons for writing are her love and concern for her sons. She describes herself as “troubled and wearied” about the dangers they may encounter (3), so she explains to her

⁴³ Merrill writes specifically about Christine de Pizan. Christine's writing is similar to Leigh's in several ways, especially regarding the motivation for writing and the maternal motivation statements that Christine employs. Merrill says, “Pizan's textual strategies were nothing if not extraordinarily well planned. They show her command of formal discourse rules, probably derived more from reading than from training, that carefully marshal, emphasize, and reiterate her arguments” (191). Her genres, register choices, and metadiscourse reveal an author confident in her command of the knowledge necessary to speak in the republic of letters. She negated her lack of personal authority by choosing to speak as a wise woman and moral teacher.

patron Princess Elizabeth, the daughter of King James I, that she wants to “write them the right and ready way to Heaven, wel warranted by the scriptures of the olde and new Testament.” Concerned about how her “Scrole” might be “kept” for her children, she places it under the protection of Princess Elizabeth (4).⁴⁴ The last part of the proem consists of an original poem “Counsell to my Children.” It contrasts an idle bee to an industrious bee and admonishes readers to gather spiritual “manna” from heaven. The poem is an example of a maternal motivation statement. It depicts the author as the industrious bee, laying up provisions against the storms of winter. In other words, the mother is caring for her family and the “common-wealth” (Leigh 10).

The first thirty-two chapters (out of forty-five) comprise approximately half of the book. These relatively short chapters extend the proem material by continuing to list additional reasons *why* Leigh is writing. It is difficult to say where the proem ends because her motivation extends into the first several chapters. This might be one of the reasons why some researchers accuse *The Mothers Blessing* of being disorganized (Sizemore 44). The proem became important for several different genres in the early seventeenth century. John Pendergast claims that as dramatic works began to require proems, the proems were valued as much as the plays were, and the audience sometimes could not tell when the proem ended and the play began (487).⁴⁵ In Chapter 5, I discuss Leigh’s proem as a source of ethos. The reasons for publishing her “scrole” range from

⁴⁴ Several writers address Elizabeth as a patron. It was usually viewed as more of a political gesture (indicating that the writer was a Calvinist Protestant). There is no indication that Elizabeth had any connection to the publication of Leigh’s book. The political implications of the dedication, however, are significant as they indicate that Leigh was a supporter of Elizabeth and her political cause. Dedicating her book to Princess Elizabeth is a maternal authority strategy. Elizabeth was the Winter Queen, the ideal Protestant mother.

⁴⁵For instance, in *Hamlet*, when the players are staging the play, Ophelia and Hamlet argue over the length of the prologue before the players begin (3.2.156-164). Hamlet compares the length of the “brief” prologue to the length of a woman’s love.

her concern over parents neglecting to provide spiritual “manna” for their children, to her concern over the need for parents to give children good names.

In the early chapters, Leigh writes about the roles and duties of a mother and wife, how to choose a wife, what names to choose for children, the importance of reading and writing, and the importance of prayer. She addresses women and advises them to teach children. She also gives advice about not fearing death or poverty, the importance of private prayer, and the benefits of reading the Bible. In the Bible, especially in the book of *Job*, a reader will find the “manna” she describes in the poem. She contends that private prayer is something no one can take away from a person. Even though authorities may take away a person’s Bible, the person will always have private prayer.⁴⁶ She gives instructions on how long prayers should be, who can pray, how to pray, to whom to pray, the need for spiritual enlightenment in prayers. Individuals who are not “enlightened” are like houses with no windows, she explains. She changes the focus of the biblical metaphor found in *The Sermon on the Mount* (Matthew 5). It states that individuals should set their “light” upon a hill so that others can see it. In contrast, Leigh claims that light should come *into* the individual. Houses need to have windows so that light can come *in*. Otherwise, the houses remain dark. Up to this point, the focus of the chapters in *The Mothers Blessing* is private, but it becomes less so in later chapters.

Summary and Analysis of Chapter 32

Leigh’s Chapter 32 is titled “God accepts weak prayer.” It is here that Leigh turns outward, away from the domestic sphere. The later chapters deal with such subjects as the Sabbath, sports, idleness, worldly concerns, the poison baits of Satan, preachers,

⁴⁶ See *Marking the Hours* Eamon Duffy argues that prayer had developed a dangerous political edge even before the break with Rome (156). Private prayer could be viewed as seditious because it could not be monitored.

tyrants, and kings. Although some of those themes appear briefly in the earlier chapters, they are much more developed in the later chapters. Literary critics usually ignore these later chapters. The reason for this is probably because in the later chapters Leigh extends the motherly advice into full-blown sermons. The last twelve chapters consist of three main themes that could be divided into coherent sermons. The topics include prayer, cares of the world, and the responsibility of preachers. Because her beginning chapters follow the more traditional pattern for a conduct book, they establish trust with the audience. The audience may not realize that in the second half of the book, Leigh's preaching takes a turn toward the more formal sermon.

Until recently, most scholars have ignored sermons (Carlson 586). However, because of the renewed emphasis on interpreting sermons as political and social texts, sermons have taken on new value. They are not nearly as dry and boring as most of us have envisioned Puritan sermons to be. For example, John Dod, a man of small stature, preached a sermon condemning liquor to university students. Some of his audience became offended and waylaid him as he walked home, putting him inside of a hollow tree trunk. They told him he had to stay there until he preached a sermon for them. His sermon "An Extempore Sermon Preached at the Request of two Scholars (by a Lover of Ale) out of a Hollow Tree" was popular and often reprinted as a broadside or libel. Dod begins, "Let me Crave your Attention; for I am a little Man, come at a short Warning, to Preach a brief Sermon, upon a small Subject, to a thin Congregation, in an unworthy Pulpit." He then takes each letter in the word *malt* as a topic of discourse. Apparently, it pleased his "thin audience."

Leigh's "sermons" like those of John Dod and other preachers are peppered with original parables and illuminating explications that reveal both the author and contemporary issues. Sermons are often ignored or passed over by researchers who probably expect dense, heavy Puritan sermons. A few researchers have claimed that Leigh's writing is "close" to a sermon or a hybrid between a sermon and a conduct manual (Gray, *Women Writers* 50). However, they have not analyzed her writing as a "sermon."

I include a detailed analysis of Chapter 32 because it represents a major turning point in Leigh's writing, and it also introduces Leigh as an author. I argue that she preaches a sermon here. This is important because in this time period women did not "preach" sermons. When Gray claims that Leigh's writing is "as close as a woman can get" to sermonizing without actually preaching a sermon, she does not explain specifically what she means. I would like to understand what that means. Other researchers have claimed that Leigh mixes genres and creates a hybrid (38). I am trying to sort those ideas out as well, not because I think the line between genres is important to nail down, but because I see Leigh doing something significant here. Leigh's move toward writing a sermon encourages us to look more closely at definitions, not because we want to categorize, but because we want to understand what the writer is *doing* with the text. Close investigation forces us to confront certain issues: What is a sermon? Does a sermon have to be orally delivered to be classified as a sermon? If so, to whom? Are individual in the home considered an audience? Does Leigh contribute to the sermon genre? How?

In Chapter 32, Leigh makes a bold claim that critics have not yet addressed. She asserts, “Me thinks if I were a man and a preacher of Gods word. . . I surely perswade my selfe, that . . . I should bring many to pray rightly, which now pray unadvisedly or not at all” (132-33). She confidently claims that if she were a man and a preacher, she could teach people to pray correctly. Then she spends the entire chapter, which consists of twenty-three pages, teaching people the correct way to pray. She preaches a “sermon” that meets all of the qualifications outlined by William Perkins in *The Art of Prophesying (1606)*. He instructed preachers to read the canonical scripture distinctly, to give a sense and understanding of it, to collect a few and profitable points, and to apply the doctrine in plain and simple speech. Leigh does all of this.

When she describes what she *would* do if she were a man, she increases her mother-based ethos because of what she identifies as her motivation. She is not like Shakespeare’s Beatrice who wants to be a man so that she can “eat [Claudio’s] heart in the marketplace” (*Much Ado About Nothing* 4.1.303-304).⁴⁷ She is not Lady Macbeth who wants some fiend to “unsex [her],” and “make [her] blood thick,” and “fill [her] from the crown to the toe, topfull / of direst cruelty” so that she can carry out her plan to murder Duncan (*Macbeth* I, v, 42-43). She is not the Duchess of Malfi, who threatens, “Were I am man, / I’d beat [Bosola’s] counterfeit face into the other” (Webster, *The Duchess of Malfi* 3.5.114-15). Leigh simply explains that if she were a man, she surely could persuade (not simply teach, but *persuade*) others to pray rightly. She is confident that she could persuade individuals to stop praying to false gods, to idols, to saints, to and

⁴⁷ Beatrice exclaims to Benedict, “Oh, that I were a man! . . . Oh, God, that I were a man! I would eat his heart in the marketplace” (4.1.305-308), and then “Oh, that I were a man for his sake! Or that I had any friend would be a man for my sake! But manhood is melted into courtesies. . . I cannot be a man with wishing, therefore I will die a woman with grieving” (4.1.319-326)

for the dead. That is a significant claim for *any* individual to make, let alone for an early modern female who is supposed to remain silent. Leigh's assertion invites us to look closely at her writing. Her confidence alone gives us cause to stop and analyze what she might be doing here. She does not simply make the claim, however. She proceeds to preach a coherent, well developed sermon on prayer.

She begins, as Perkins says all sermons should begin, with a clear reference to a canonical scripture (*The Art of Prophesying*). Leigh references Matthew 7:7 by way of paraphrase: "Ask and you shall have." She explains that the scripture simply means that the individual must "ask," regardless of that person's perceptions of worthiness or the merit of the question. The scripture does not say the request will be granted whether one asks or not. It says to ask. That is the key. She relates an *exemplum* to illustrate the concept. Exempla are essential to early modern sermons. In Perkins's *A Direction for the Government of the Tongue*, he tells a parable about three sons who learn at their father's deathbed that only one of them is the true son. They stage a trial to see which son is the true son. They prop up the dead father's body against a tree and shoot an arrow at it, claiming that the son who hits closest to the father's heart is the true son. Only the true son refuses to shoot the arrow and thus passes the trial (23-24). Perkins explains that God's children are likely to face a similar test and that "such persons with whome blaspheming is rife, are very devuils incarnate, and the children of the devill, who rend God in pieces, and shoote him through with their dartes" (24). In other words, those who cannot control their tongues are using arrows that strike God's heart.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ Here I see a parallel to George Herbert's poetry. He describes prayer as "Engine against th' Almighty" . . . Reversed thunder, Christ-side-piercing spear" in "Prayer (I)" (21)

Leigh's exemplum is much less bizarre. In her parable, Leigh explains that it is unwise to be silent when a person can receive something that will make him or her better simply by asking. For example, if a master should say to a servant that if the servant would simply ask, the master would give the servant "a verie good peniworth" because the servant has been a good servant and the master desires to reward him. However, if the servant is too timid or too proud to ask, "it is tenne to one but his Masters minde will be cleane altered, although he were never so fully bent to deal liberally with him, and saith to himself, If it be not worth the asking, it shall bee worth the keeping; or, if it be not worth the asking, it is not worth thanks" (Leigh 135). This is to say that a silent tenent is not likely to get a lower rate if he does not ask the master.

Leigh goes on to explain that the master knows what the servant needs and wants even before the servant asks, and the master wants to give it to the servant, but the master wants to know that the *servant* knows. She compares that situation to Christ, who knows what a person wants and needs, but wants to know that the *petitioner* knows, so Christ said, "Come to me alone, & shut the doore, no body shall know, what is betwixt thee and me. I know thy sinnes already, but I would know whether thou knowest them or no" (138). Then Leigh interjects, "Oh the mercy, the wonderfull mercie of Christ." He is the best of masters. She reasons that everyone wants to serve a good master, to be proud to "weare his cognizance upon his sleeve," because it is a credit to serve such a good master (140).

Heller notes that Leigh's constant emphasis on private prayer is startling, especially given the Protestant emphasis on attending sermons and reading scriptures (*The Mother's Legacy* 106). Many of the contemporary spiritual conduct manuals

include “set down” prayers. By this, I mean prayers that were written and could be repeated verbatim. Even George Herbert’s *Country Parson* includes “The author’s PRAYER before Sermon” and “The author’s PRAYER after SERMON” (113-14). In contrast, Leigh explains, “Neither can words be set downe what ye should say,” but each person “ought to seek by praier to God, to get victory of that sinne which otherwise would overcome, and destroy him body and soule for ever and ever” (155). Leigh argues that there can be no written prayer because each petitioner and each petition is unique (154). The “best of masters” does not want “set down prayers.”

Because of her unique emphasis on private and personal prayer, Leigh’s parable is similar to George Herbert’s poetry. For one thing, Herbert, a master of rhetorical devices (Daniell 251), claims there is “one bosom sin” that “blows quite away” all of the defenses a person may have set up. The “bosom-sin” is unique for each person (“Sin I” 19).⁴⁹ Leigh and Herbert both emphasize the uniqueness of the “bosom-sin.” In addition, his poem “Redemption” is strikingly similar to Leigh’s parable. In “Redemption,” the renter, “having been tenant long to a rich lord,” decides to ask for a new lease at a lower rate, so he goes to heaven to find his master, but learns that the master has “lately gone / About some land, which he had dearly bought / Long since on earth.” The tenant seeks for the master in “cities, theatres, gardens, parks and courts,” but he does not find the master until he hears “a ragged noise and mirth / Of thieves and murderers.” He sees the master there, “Who straight, *Your suit is granted*, said, and died” (*George Herbert* 14-15). Herbert’s poetry expresses the same intimate relationship between God and man as

⁴⁹ Coleridge admired this sonnet “for the purity of the language and the fullness of the sense” and “the simple dignity of the language” (See note 1 in *George Herbert and Seventeenth-Century Religious Poets* page 19)

Leigh's parable. The good master waits for the request and then grants it.⁵⁰ Herbert's poetry is like Leigh's prose in many ways, especially in the constant search for dialogue with God, the struggles of the soul that ultimately conclude with an intimate conversation, which ends for Herbert when "Love bade [the speaker] welcome."⁵¹

The servants in Leigh's manual and in Herbert's poem happily serve a good master, but what of a bad master? Leigh contrasts the good master with an evil master by referring to the Old Testament book of Habakkuk. Earlier in the chapter, she had claimed that she could persuade those who pray amiss to pray rightly, including those who pray to idols. Habakkuk provides the setting for a discussion of idol worshippers, those who worship gold and silver rather than the true God. Christopher Hill has noted that an early modern audience would not need to run and find a Bible to refresh their minds about the content of an obscure Old Testament book (*The English Bible* 49). He claims that a literate early modern reader would have been intimately familiar with the reference, the context, and the marginal comments furnished by the Geneva Bible.⁵² Habakkuk is not easy Hebrew poetry. Kevin Killeen claims that a reference to an obscure Old Testament book such as Habakkuk is not an underhanded attempt to avoid some radar of the king's censorship for sedition. Instead, this type of reference shows the daring intellectualism of early modern writers who expected audiences to have the necessary knowledge to follow such "juggling of texts," as well as "an appreciation of the virtuoso scholarship involved" (396). Leigh shows "daring intellectualism" according to Killeen's definition.

⁵⁰ Herbert's poetry was published posthumously in 1633 in *The Temple*.

⁵¹ See Herbert's "Love" (III) page 69

⁵² King James had a fierce dislike for the Geneva Bible. His dislike led to the King James Version of the Bible that was published in 1611. James wanted to have an English Bible that could replace the popular Geneva Bible. For years after 1611, the Geneva Bible remained the people's choice in England, regardless of their Protestant leanings. (See Hill 65). The Geneva Bible is noted for its clear and readable print, its abundant white space, and its Calvinist-leaning marginal commentary. The marginal notes served as study guides for English readers.

Leigh explains that “the covetous person, whom God abhorreth, hee may bragge what a deale of earth and earthly durt hee hath purchased, as the Prophet saith, *they loade themselves with clay*: he doth not say, God giveth ti them; but *they loade themselves*” (142-43). Leigh’s marginal notes in *The Mothers Blessing* (available only if a person downloads the thumbnail copies of Leigh’s book from a site such as Early English Books Online database) refer the reader to Habakkuk 2.6, which reads “Shall not all these take up a parable against him, and a taunting proverb against him, and say “ho, he that increaseth that which is not his? How long? and he that ladeth himself with thicke claye?” Leigh’s audience would have been familiar with Habakkuk and its context.

Habakkuk is Hebrew poetry at its finest (Robertson 214) and can be interpreted on several levels. Because it is not familiar to most readers today, I will briefly summarize Habakkuk Chapter 2, and I will include the corresponding marginal notes found in the Geneva Bible (because the early modern reader would be familiar with them). The chapter begins with the author’s declaration, “I will stand upon my watche, and set me upon the towre, and will look and see what he would say unto me.” While he is on his watch, Habakkuk receives a message from God, but he fears that people will rebuke him. He is commanded to write the vision that he saw and to “make it plaine upon tables, that he may runne that readeth it.” The Geneva Bible marginal notes explain Habakkuk was commanded to write his message large enough that one running past could read it. In other words, it was a billboard. The message he received was that God does not forget His chosen people, in spite of wickedness that surrounds them. God tells Habakkuk that wicked people load themselves with “thicke claye.”

The marginal notes explain that some people take gold and silver as their idols, rather than worshipping God. To those people, Habakkuk directs a parable about foolish people who load themselves with “claye.” The more they take, the more burdened they will feel, and as they take their idols into their homes, the very walls of the house will testify that the inhabitants are “dissemblers.” The parable continues: “Thou hast consulted shame to thine own house, by destroying many people, and hast sinned against thine own soule. For the stone shal crye out of the wall, and the beame out of the timber shall answer it” (Habakkuk 2:10-11). The marginal notes explain that the stones will testify against the inhabitant, and the wood will “answer the same.” When the inhabitants of the house ultimately turn for help to their collection of idols made of stone and wood, then the stone and wood idols will not answer them: “Wo unto him that saith to the wood, *Awake*, and to the dumme stone, *Rise up*, it shall teach thee: beholde it is laide over with golde and silver, and there is no breath in it. But the Lord is in his holie Temple: let all the earth kepe silence before him” (Habakkuk 2.19-20).

These verses have various levels of interpretation. The first thing to notice, however, is that Leigh chooses an Old Testament book whose author is determined to be on guard at all times. Habakkuk is concerned that others will rebuke him, but he receives confirmation that his message is important enough to be inscribed on tablets of stone, like the Ten Commandments (Peterson 214), and that he should write it—write it in large letters. It should be large enough that a runner could read it as he or she sprints past. Leigh may have related to Habakkuk. She too vowed to be constantly on guard, constantly “fearefull, faithfull, and carefull.” She too felt concern that others would rebuke her. However, because she felt the message was important, she too took the

uncommon step to write it so that many could access it quickly and easily. Her audience, familiar with the Old Testament in ways that we probably cannot fully comprehend, probably noticed the similarities between Habakkuk and Leigh. By aligning her own actions with those of the prophet Habakkuk, Leigh gains credibility with her audience. Her reference to Habakkuk becomes a maternal authority statement. Leigh aligns herself with Habakkuk and draws authority from his experiences.

In Habakkuk's parable, the wood and stone of the home cry out against the dissembler who tries to hoard his gold and silver. According to the early Protestant minister Gerrard Winstanley, one of the worst things a person could do was to "lock up the treasuries of the earth in chests and houses, and suffer it to rust or moulder, while others starve for want to whom it belong—and it belongs to all" (qtd. in Hill *The English Bible* 332). Leigh expresses a similar concern. She tells her children not to marvel that she doing something so unusual as to publish her writing. She explains she is doing it because no one is reading the "godly books" that are molding in men's closets in spite of the need for their words. She writes:

[T]here bee so manie godly books in the world, that they mould in some mens studies, while their Masters are mard, because they will not meditate upon them; as many mens garments motheate in their chests, while their Christian bretheren quake with cold in the street for want of covering; know therefore, that it was the motherly affection that I bare unto you all, which me me now. . . forget my selfe in regard of you. (5-6)

Leigh explains her motivation, and she exhibits confidence. Apparently she expects or hopes that individuals will pay attention to her book, even though other "godly" books

are being ignored. Leigh explains that those who load themselves with clay look “foolish and abominable” worse than strumpets and whores who sell their souls and bodies (143).

The reference to the home illustrates the complexities of domestic space. *Home* is not simply a place made of wood and stone. *Home* was a complex *thirdspace* in Leigh’s day. Erasmus, for example, used “home” as a simile to explain the relationship between the body and the soul—a constant theme of the metaphysical poets. In *The Lying-In Mother*,” Eutrapilu, a friend of Fabulla’s husband, visits the new mother Fabulla to congratulate her on the birth of her son. The discussion evolves into a dialectic exchange regarding the relationship between the body and the soul (mind). Eutrapilu explains to the new mother, “You are in your bed chamber a wife, in your shop a weaver of tapestry, in your ware house a seller of tapestry, in your kitchin a cooke, among your servants a mistris, and among your children a mother, and yet notwithstanding all these, you are in one and the same house” (*Seven dialogues* 57). Fabulla replies, “So then belike the minde is in the body, as I am in my house” (57). Eutrapilu confirms that the mind is like the body, capable of performing various functions within the body, even as the woman performs various functions in the house.

John Dod provides an additional example of the parallel relationship between a woman and her house. In describing a “woman of strength,” he writes:

For notwithstanding that this woman, together with her notable works be shut up and limited within the wals of her owne house. . . yet her praise passing forth, and climbing up the top of the house commeth and appeareth. . . lifted up into an open place, from whence their virtue may be seene of all (*Bathshebaes Instructions* 77).

In this case, the home transmits the message up the walls and beyond the private sphere into the public for the whole world to see.

A home made of wood and stone that testifies against or praises its inhabitants contrasts with Habakkuk's reference to "dumme" wood and stone "images." Those who worship the wood and stone will ultimately find the idols "dumme" or silent. Wood and stone idols also represent the false gods that Protestants accused the Catholics of worshipping. In short, gold and silver represent the false idols of the highly ornate Catholic cathedrals, as well as gold and silver material goods that replace God in a Protestant's heart.⁵³ Both are dangerous, as far as Leigh is concerned.

The final verse of Habakkuk states that "the Lord is in his holie Temple: let all the earth kepe silence before him." Habakkuk calls the "dumme" idols of the previous verse "silent teachers" (verse 19) because they do not answer the bad master. In Habakkuk, the earth's silence emanates from reverence. God is in the houses of those who pray *rightly*. A New Testament verse describes the physical body as a place, even God's temple (I Corinthians 6.19): "Know ye not that your body it the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, whom ye have of God, and ye are not your own." The New Testament reference calls to mind Erasmus's interpretation of the body as the "house" of the soul. Here Habakkuk is saying that the body is the "temple" for the Holy Ghost, who is also a silent teacher. The body—as the house or temple of the soul—will cry out against prayers

⁵³ Leigh dedicates an entire chapter to poverty. She claims that one of her reasons for writing is to "arme them against poverty." By that she means that her readers should not "feare poverty" because "it is the state of the children of God to bee poore in the world" and "money is the roote of all evill." She claims that many "fearing the cold storms of poverty, which never last long, run on to the hot fire of hell, which never hath an end" (20). She notes that it "requireth "many words," however, to persuade men not to fear poverty because many men have hearts set upon worldly things.

addressed to dumme idols, whereas the silent teacher of the body—the Holy Spirit—is accessed through silent meditation and “right” prayer

The spatial references in Habakkuk represent Leigh’s strategic use of *maternal domestic sphere statements*. *Home* invokes powerful emotions. By portraying domestic space as an active agent that recognizes the ethical behavior of the inhabitants, the *home* becomes a conveyor of maternal ethos.

Leigh’s purpose was to teach people to pray rightly. Her purpose was ultimately to show that the dumb idols will never answer prayers. Dumb idols represent the unworthy master. Only “the best of masters” answers prayers. Habakkuk, with its layered meanings, illustrates that message. In addition to accomplishing that task, however, it also justifies Leigh as a writer. Habakkuk could easily be extended into a pointed criticism of Leigh’s day, which I believe is an appropriate interpretation. Protestant readers would relate to Old Testament people who see themselves surrounded by “tyrants” and others who continually load themselves with “claye” and false idols that destroy their own souls and the souls of others. Habakkuk could certainly be interpreted as a commentary on the early modern political times.⁵⁴ Maurice Lee notes that “the traditional picture of the Jacobean court persists: a kaleidoscope of drunken maids of honor, effeminate young men, an endless stream of gold showered upon these worthless people, and a smug absentee king relentlessly pursuing deer” (158).

After relating Habakkuk, Leigh expounds on the doctrine almost exactly as do the marginal notes of the Geneva Bible. She explains that Habakkuk accuses many people of being “full of hypocrisie, dissemblers, and would serve the world, and would not have

⁵⁴ Such an interpretation would be consistent with Christine Luckyj’s advice in “Rachel Speght and the ‘Critical Reader.’”

the Divell know it: but the divell will not bee so deceived, hee maketh account the world is his, and hee hampereth all those that love it, in chaines. . .[however] his own conscience will bee a witness against him” (147). She explains:

[Christ] did not onely bid men pray, and promised they should bee heard, but also told them to whom to pray; and because men durst not goe to God alone, hee bad them goe in his name, and promised that he would be there with them. . . and therefore any might boldy come to him; hee teacheth them where to aske, privately; and what to aske. (150)

After covering all aspects of prayer, she ends with one more exemplum. She references the New Testament parable of the “importuning” widow—an appropriate parable considering that Leigh *is* a widow who is teaching individuals to pray correctly. The parable also serves as another “type” of Leigh, as we saw in Habakkuk. The parable describes a widow who constantly petitions a judge for justice:

There was a certain Judge in a city, which neither feared God, nor revered man, and there was a widow in the city, which sayd, Doe me justice against mine adversarie; but he would not for a time; yet afterwards hee sayd, Although I feare not God, nor reverence man, yet will I doe her justice, lest at the last shee chance to weary me, and the Lord sayd, Heare what the unrighteous Judge saith, and shall not God avenge the cause of his Elect, which cry and call day & night upon him? (Luke 18.1-7)

. This parable represents a *maternal authority statement*. Leigh *is* a widow who prays often. She embodies the “importuning widow.” It is almost as if the importuning widow has materialized in the form of the author. Leigh, and the Geneva Bible marginal

comments point out that in this parable the judge is not a “type” of Christ but is an evil judge. Individuals ought always to pray and not to “wax faint.” The marginal notes in the Geneva Bible explain that “faint” means to never grow weary. The marginal notes explain that to “wax faint” means never to grow wearily. The marginal notes also explain that

“wearying” the judge means: “Word for word, beat [the judges] down with her blows, and it is a metaphor of wrestlers, who beat their adversaries with their fists or clubs; so do they that are importunate beat the judges ears with their crying out, even as it were with blows” (Luke 18.5 Geneva Bible marginal notes).

The widow in the parable exerts power over an earthly, corrupt judge by her righteous and constant plea. The marginal notes also explain that the parable teaches those who pray to keep asking, “not to weary us, but to exercise us, so that we ask with the impatience that long delay brings” (Luke 18.1 Geneva Bible marginal notes). The parable portrays a widow who is neither weak nor feeble. She has the moves of the wrestler and “words” that can “beat down” a wicked judge. These references help us to envision the author of *The Mothers Blessing* as a wise and confident writer who builds credibility by beginning “as if she were a man and a preacher,” working her way past those who would discredit her, and then ending as a widow armed with words, or “manna,” from scriptural sources that give her power over any adversary.

Finally, Leigh asks her sons to pardon her for speaking too long: “And do not thinke (my sonnes) that I have spoken too much of prayer; for as I sayd before, without it wee have no promise to obtain any favor of God, not yet to be kept from any evil by God, and therefore do it” (153). She concludes, as an early modern Protestant sermon should,

with a clear call to action, to apply the teachings: “Therefore, do it” (Leigh 153). Not only has she completed what she said she would do if she were a man, she has done it as well as any man or preacher could have. Using plain and clear English (How much more plain can “Do it” be?), she embodies George Herbert’s poetic narrator who claims “I like our language. . . Who cannot dress it well, want wit, not words” (“The Son” 60), and also the narrator who abandons excessive rhetorical flourishes and is content with saying “Shepherds are honest people, let them sing. . . Who plainly say *My God, my King*” (“Jordan I” 25).

David Daniell has argued that William Tyndale’s 1534 translation of the Bible into English initiated a plain style “itself the product of keen rhetorical craft,” that created a form of prose accessible for what he calls the mass of ordinary people who had something important to say (252). Leigh’s prose style is the clearest of English, characterized by monosyllabic words. This does not mean that the prose is watered down. Daniell argues that Shakespeare recognized the value of polysyllabic utterances, but he stresses that “when [Shakespeare] wants suddenly to turn our hearts over, [he] does not make Falstaff say as would befit a Latin-educated knight before the battle of Shrewsbury, ‘The advent of the imminent confrontation elevates my apprehensions,’ but ‘I would ‘twere bed-time, Hal, and all well’ (*Henry IV* 5.1.125 qtd. in Daniell 263). A more recent example would be that Martin Luther King Jr. did not say “I possess an aspiration.” He said, “I have a dream.”

In *Ecclesiastes or a Discourse concerning the Gift of Preaching as it falls under the rules of Art*, John Wilkins described the art of preaching a sermon this way:

It must be *plain* and naturall, not being darkened with the affectation of *Scholastic all* harshnesse, or *Rhetoricall* flourishes. Obscurity in the discourse is an argument of ignorance in the minde. The greatest learning is to be seen in the greatest plainnesse. The more clearly we understand any thing our selves, the more easily can we expound it to others. When the notion it self is good, the best way to set it off, is in the most obvious plain expression. (129)

Written in plain and clear English prose, Chapter 32 serves as an introduction to a woman who is intent on conveying her message in the most effective way that she can. Chapter 32 is much longer than the earlier chapters. It could function as a self-contained, coherent, and powerful sermon. I argue that the chapters that follow chapter 32 extend what Leigh began. The chapters that follow Chapter 32 resemble coherent sermons that I discuss in subsequent chapters.

The *ethos* that dwells in Leigh's writing makes *The Mothers Blessing* a comfortable place. My aim was to give Leigh a space of her own before I place her writing next to specific texts. However, because I reference several unfamiliar genres, I take the next section to define and explain seventeenth-century genre.

INTERCHAPTER

SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY GENRES

Several prominent genres of the seventeenth century peaked in popularity or appeared for the first time and then disappeared from use. Because the remainder of this dissertation discusses various genres, this chapter will define some of the genres that enter into the conversation in the next chapters.

Commonplace Book

As a genre, commonplace books have a rich but complex history. All kinds of books and manuscripts over the years have been classified as commonplace books. Notebooks, diaries, journals, or anything that did not fit comfortably into another genre was fair game for classification as a commonplace book (Zboray and Zboray 102). Only recently have scholars carved out a definition that gives the commonplace book a space of its own.⁵⁵ The most accurate definition and the one that helps explain the genre is “a book in which ‘commonplaces’ or passages important for reference were collected, usually under a general head; hence, a book in which one records passages or matters to be especially remembered or referred to, with or without arrangement” (qtd. in Havens 67). In sum, a commonplace book is a place to record important quotation so that the writer could easily access them. In the seventeenth century, it might have been a book

⁵⁵ Earle Havens’s *Commonplace Books* includes several sections in which he defines and traces the history of the commonplace book, illustrating its importance, particularly to the early years of the seventeenth century. David R. Parker discusses four commonplace books from the Tudor era. All four are manuscript commonplace books. He notes that the commonplace books offer readers a unique look at the “man” behind the book, as well as the reading practices of the Tudor era. He offers an interesting discussion of the subversive nature, or possible/probable dual meanings of some of the entries, and the interesting ways that the writers bring the material together in the manuscripts. David Allan’s *Commonplace Books and Reading in Georgian England* devotes a chapter to the history of the commonplace book. His purpose is to show that the commonplace book did not become relegated to the “backwaters of literature” by the time of the Enlightenment. He quotes Jonathan Swift and others who discuss the commonplace book. An interesting thing to note is that there is no publication that centers on the commonplace book of the renaissance or early modern times.

with blank pages. The writer would devise a system of organization and then collect particularly impressive material and record it in her or his own literary production: a commonplace book.

After a period of decline in popularity during the medieval period, the commonplace book reemerged and found a place of its own. This was largely due to Erasmus. In *De Copia*, Erasmus defined the genre of the commonplace book, and he composed instructions regarding the way the books should be organized. He bridged the gap between the “commonplace” of the classical orators and the seventeenth-century writers. Erasmus built his theory on the rich classical tradition of Aristotle who claimed that the best way to form an argument was to consider a subject in terms of the most basic categories, or “topics.” Cicero expanded on Aristotle’s ideas and noted that pithy lines from esteemed philosophers, statesmen, and poet—or *sententiae*—had the potential to sway a jury or a mob. Quintilian called the collected material in a commonplace book “artificial memory,” and Seneca compared the work of compiling commonplace books to the work of bees:

We also, I say, ought to copy the bees, and sift whatever we have gathered from a varied course of reading, for such things are better preserved if they are kept separate; then, by applying the supervising care with which our nature has endowed us. . . we could so blend those several flavors into one delicious compound that, even though it betrays its origin, yet it nevertheless is clearly a different thing than whence it came. (qtd. in Havens 14)

Gathering memorable material, or *sententiae*, offered the orator a ready supply of powerful and impressive words. During the renaissance, there was renewed interest in

note-taking and a sense that knowledge was available to anyone who wanted to be learned (D. Allen 40).

The commonplace book led to developments in several areas of study. The study of law, science, and theology benefitted from the compilation of memorable material. Also, the commonplace book introduced a new way of biblical study. Material from the Bible or sermons could be recorded for reflection and shared with other individuals. Commonplace books also aided preachers by helping them organize and remember material for sermons. In *The Art of Prophesying* (1602 Latin, 1606 English), William Perkins describes a method for organizing commonplace books so that preachers who were “in the trenches” in the fight against popery could preserve ideas that were worthy to be remembered for future sermons. The commonplace book, “nicely suited to straightforward and well-organized explanations of religious doctrine by quotation and reference to authorities, was thus given a place of pride in the polemical arsenals of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation” (Havens 52). Writers used commonplace books for teaching, evangelicalism, and for disputing.

Some women wrote commonplace books. They recorded *sententiae* from sermons that they had heard or from books they had encountered. Ann Bowyer’s commonplace book is a good example. It reveals a young woman who was literate, articulate, trained in rhetoric, appreciative of poetry, both classical and contemporary, a young woman who was very familiar with Chaucer. She had portions of the *Wife of Bath* transcribed into her book as well as portions from *The Knight’s Tale*. In some places, the handwriting changes, and it looks as though she may be teaching another person, perhaps

her sister, to write. Commonplace books were sometimes used as educational tools, both for the teacher and for the learner, which helped in the learning process.

Commonplace books led to other genres. Michel de Montaigne (1580) wrote commonplace books. He began adding his own observations to his commonplace entries. He “studied his own mind. . . [and] applied his knowledge of himself to anyone he met in life, by report or in books” (Screech xiv). His responses evolved into *essais*. Montaigne’s *Essais* was originally published in 1580 and translated into English in 1603 by John Florio. Montaigne’s essay “On Cannibals” was highly influential in Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* and probably in *Hamlet* as well (Yates 245). Montaigne’s essays were unique because of his insistence on his own point of view. Initially, this type of reflective writing was viewed as an eccentric weakness. Individuals recorded information gleaned from popular libels that sensationalized the Overbury scandal into their commonplace books. They often added their own interpretations of the events, and “commonplacing turned the reader from passive recipient to active judge” (Bellamy 114). Until recently commonplace books have been seen only as “personal whims.” However, David Parker argues that commonplace books are “fertile grounds for politically charged writing—open and encoded” (13).

Montaigne’s *home* became a kind of a commonplace book, with inscriptions of *sententiae* from Greek and Latin texts, including Biblical ones, in the very beams of his famous library (Screech xi). In a way, his physical dwelling became a type of commonplace book. George Herbert did the same thing. In *The Country Parson*, Herbert explains that in the parson’s home “even the walls are not idle, but something is written, or painted there, which may excite the reader to a thought of piety” (69). The

editor of Herbert's *The Country Parson* reveals that the walls of Herbert's home at Little Gidding were decorated with "texts and mottos" (Wall 69). In the funeral sermon for Lady Anne Clifford, Bishop Edward Rainbow remembers:

[Clifford] would frequently bring out of the rich Store-house of her Memory, things new and old, Sentences, or Sayings of remark, which she had read or learned out of Authors and with these her Walls, her Bed, her Hangings, and Furniture must be adorned; causing her Servants to write them in Papers, and her Maids to pin them up, that she, or they, in the time of their dressing, or as occasion served, might remember, and make discants with them. So that, though she had not many Books in her Chamber, yet it was dressed up with the flowers of a library. (qtd. in Acheson 44)

Dorothy Leigh makes a similar recommendation, admonishing her readers to follow the biblical Solomon's example and "write it upon the walls of [their] houses" (26). Leigh claims that writing commonplaces on the walls would help the parents who were responsible for teaching their children and households. Commonplace books helped individuals to remember what they heard and then disseminate the sermons.

Sermons

Sermons are one of the most understudied and important genres in early modern literature (Morrissey 115). They were important and highly rhetorical; their function was to "mitigate and move" the audiences (Perkins *The Art of Prophecy*). They are also unique in that they were delivered orally and then sometimes transcribed into print form. Sermons were possibly the most popular form of printed genre. Because they played an

important part in the formation of public opinion, the crown made highly significant attempts to control what was said (and thus printed) from the pulpit (G. Davies 1).

The texts of sermons varied widely. Their purpose was to enthrall their audiences and to be the engine against the antichrist, as well as to explicate scripture (Perkins *The Art of Prophecy*). John Donne delivered sermons at court with King James among the audience. George Herbert delivered sermons in his county parsonage at Bemerton. John Dod delivered a sermon from inside a tree trunk.⁵⁶ William Perkins delivered sermons all over London. Sermons were delivered at executions, at funerals, at christenings, and at least once every Sunday at every local parish in Britain. Attendance at sermons was mandatory, and people were supposed to attend the sermons in their own parish.

The style of sermons varied. John Donne's sermons often reflected his poetic style. They were filled with elaborate rhetorical flourishes and Latin phrases. In contrast, William Perkins favored the plain style. He claimed that sermons should be adorned with variety and plenty of precepts to match the capacity of the audience: the humble, the knowledgeable but not-as-yet-humbled, the ignorant and unteachable; the teachable yet ignorant, the fallen, and the believers (*The Art of Prophecy*). Axiomatical or syllogistical devices should be used rather than artificial memory that dulls the wit, and Latin phrases should not be intermingled with the sermon because Latin would "disturb the minds" of the listeners. He also stressed delivery. Preachers should stand up straight and "quiet." They should speak loud enough for the audience to hear and lift up their eyes and hands to show confidence. They should speak from the briefest notes arranged in their commonplace books. His instructions illustrate the dual nature of

⁵⁶ See Chapter 1 of this dissertation

the sermon. It was a highly rhetorical performance that should follow the procedure he carefully outlined, but sermons were also a print phenomenon.

The audience was important. For the oral performance, the audience had the duty to stay attentive. They often took notes. This had some advantages, in that it kept them awake and appropriately engaged, but it also concerned some preachers because audiences could reproduce the text and circulate it. John Dod became known by the nickname of “Decalogue Dod” because of a popular sermon he preached about the Ten Commandments. One of his listeners took notes and then published the sermon. Dod and his colleague Robert Cleaver decided to publish a corrected version of the sermon, and it became one of the most popular sermons printed during the early years of the seventeenth century *A Plaine and Familiar Exposition of the Tenne Commandements*, dated September 1604. The book ran to nineteen editions over the next thirty years, and according to Patrick Collinson, it made Dod and Cleaver “the most successful co-authors of the century” (*Godly People* 32).

The printed sermon reached a large and fairly receptive audience. Published sermons were sold at a reasonably low price, and many people could afford them. They were equated with the oral sermon, and the same condemnation accompanied those who neglected to read sermons as those who neglected to attend church. Sermons were incredibly popular and were widely read.⁵⁷ James Rigney explains that “the sermon was

⁵⁷Sermons have not been viewed as the rhetorical productions that they ultimately were: “The study of sermons has been rather disconnected: those historians who have used sermons have treated them either as sources or subjects, not as rhetorical texts.” Recently, researchers have begun to emphasize the argumentative structure of sermons and to see the importance of rhetorical “commonplaces” in the arguments (Morrissey 115). Sermons were a significant tool for state propaganda and “a site of religious conflict” in the seventeenth century (117).

a genre, chosen among many others, by the righteous reader. The righteous reader proclaimed a special state of piety by his or her choice of such reading matter” (205).⁵⁸

Context is critical to understanding sermons. Taken out of context, the sermons can range from making no sense at all to being misinterpreted. When they are seen in context, they take on powerful social and political meaning. For example, after the failed Gunpowder Plot, John Donne reminds his audience, which included James, that God spared the life of the king because James was divinely appointed to be the king. The people were not to debate whether or not the king was a righteous king. Their duty is to obey: “So also do we sin against the Father, the root of power, in conceiving amiss the power of the Civil Magistrate” (Donne 302).

James realized the power of sermons, and he dictated what could be preached (and thus published) as sermon. Donne echoes James’s concern about monitoring the sermons’ content:

Preaching is to make [people] know things appertaining to their salvation. But when men do neither, neither teach, nor preach, but (as his Majesty observes the manner to be) *To soar in points too deep, To muster up their own reading, To display their own wit, or ignorance in meddling with civil matters,* or (as his Majesty adds *in rude and indecent reviling of persons*: this is that which hath drawn down his Majesty’s piercing eye to see it, and his royal care to correct it. (316)

The King was directly involved in what could or could not be contained in the “text” of the printed material. Preachers were warned not to violate the restrictions that authorities had placed upon what could be transmitted orally from the pulpit or in writing.

Pamphlets

Pamphlets were incredibly diverse and popular in the seventeenth century. They were a new type of writing for a new type of audience. A pamphlet was a “small treatise on some subject or question of political concern, current or contemporary interest, personal, social, political, ecclesiastical, controversial” (S. Clark 23). It was shorter than a book and usually contained fewer than one hundred pages. Sometimes pamphlets were stitched sideways. Sometimes they were not bound at all. They were one of the cheapest forms of published material available for the public. The term “pamphlet” was an unflattering one, used in the context of scorn or belittling.

Pamphlets were aimed at a new type of audience. Although the poorest of the people could not afford pamphlets, the middle class could afford them. Some pamphlets were addressed “to the young gentleman,” others to “all the wanton youths of England.” One pamphlet was addressed to “cares not what they be” or “to the poor” (39). The author of the pamphlet catered to the yeoman and middle class, farmers, teachers, lawyers and civil servants. But the relationship of the author to the audience was complex. The author could not risk alienating the audience, and yet the tone of the pamphlets was often sarcastic and biting, ridiculing professions and individuals. In Chapter 4, I illustrate the heated responses that *The Arraignment of Lewd, Idle, Froward and Unconstant Women* generated. One of the first women to respond to Swetnam’s pamphlet, Rachel Speght, seriously damaged her credibility by responding angrily and by participating in the name-calling. I contrast Speght’s emotional response to Swetnam, as well as to his pamphlet, with Leigh’s calm and logical defense of women. Leigh’s “carefull” response contributes to her positive ethos and consequently to her credibility.

Pamphlets targeted an increasingly literate audience. Pamphleteers combined their resources through the channels open to them, “supplying a taste for reading in people to whom the printed word had never been directed” (Clark 39). The point is that the audience was much more literate than any audience previous to this time, and they were willing to pay for the pamphlets. Pamphleteers used rhetorical terms and devices. This offers evidence of linguistic vitality that permeated all social levels.

Writers of pamphlets included a wide array of authors: anonymous authors, hack writers, and literary writers. Sandra Clark examines Thomas Nashe, Robert Greene, Thomas Dekker, Barnaby Rich, Thomas Kyd, and Stephen Gosson as writers of pamphlets. Some of the anonymous pamphlets could have been authored by women. Ironically, these authors of pamphlets did not like the genre of the pamphlet. They scorned it. They saw pamphlet-writing as derogatory and degrading. They made money writing pamphlets, and they became what we might consider a part of pop culture. Society watched their every move. Swetnam was a part of this because of his notorious *Lewd, Idle, Froward Woman* pamphlet. Tone is critical to pamphlets, and pamphlets are often filled with irony and satire.

Authors often attacked, criticize, and responded to one another. Thomas Dekker describes pamphleteers as “madmen who [are] free of wits” who make five or six trips to the press and “lay whole litters of blind intention” (qtd. in Clarke 26). The irony is that Dekker, himself, wrote pamphlets. However, writers of political and theological pamphlets also included King James who wrote pamphlets about the evils of tobacco and witchcraft. Authors also included preachers and theologians, such as William Tyndale and Sir Thomas More. Tyndale and More exchanged several pamphlets about Tyndale’s

book *The Obedience of the Christian Man* (McIlwain xx). Publishers often incited debates and seemed to thrive off of the contentious nature of the pamphlets. They pitted authors against one another.

Pamphlets debated rhetorical style. Thomas Nashe favored the Ciceronian style. Harvey favored the newfangledness of Ramus's plain style. Their argument reflects the enmity between the rhetorical styles of Ramus and Cicero. Nashe attacked the less lettered authors who continued to turn to elaborate figures of speech, Ciceronian structures, and euphuisms in striving for effect. Ramus's style was "new found toys" (Clarke 231).

Pamphlets are sometimes considered as unworthy of rhetorical analysis. However, formal rhetoric was often the topic of pamphlet wars. In addition, pamphlets are often coupled with the word "war." That illustrates the contentious nature of pamphlets. Pamphlets often followed the prescribed rules of rhetorical argument of introduction, division, proof, refutation and conclusion (230). Pamphlets that deviated from traditional rhetorical conventions were attacked. For example, Rachel Speght's pamphlet attacks Joseph Swetnam's pamphlet for its lack of organization. Pamphlets shared some characteristics with libels and broadsides, including the propensity to spread inflammatory information.

Libels and Broadside Publications

Libels and broadsides are additional genres that have received little serious scholarly attention. Libels were acerbic, often vicious poems directed for the most part at a person. They were usually printed on one piece of paper, and they often included images. Sometimes the paper was cut in half. *Broadside* is a term sometimes used

interchangeably with *libel*. Broad­sides were often poems or rhymes that could be set to music; the name of the tune was often identified in the text. The term *libel* seems to be the most descriptively accurate term, so I will use that term in this discussion. Libels were important vehicles for circulating opinions about scandals. They were easily distributed and often seen as disposable literature. However, libels were also often copied in commonplace books which were then shared among readers (Bellany 110). For example, William Davenport’s commonplace book contained ten libels on the Overbury Scandal, seven of which survive in other collections. One libel describes Francis Carr as “a wife, a witch, a murderer, and a whore.” (98) What this means is that, on the one hand, libels were disposable literature. On the other hand, they became cultural artifacts.

Libels (and broad­sides) date back to the Middle Ages. Authors were almost always anonymous. One non-anonymous author, William Collingbourne, was tried and executed for a crude jingle satirizing Richard II and his ministers. During Tudor times, libels were used as vehicles for expressing religious discontent as well as for preserving the memory of martyrs and celebrating rebels such as the earl of Essex. Libels were probably encouraged by the satire craze of the 1590s.⁵⁹ In an attempt to suppress printed satires, authorities forced them underground into more subversive forms of political poetry, such as libels (99).

Libels left London and entered the provinces by way of visitors who probably carried copies home to their friends. They were often enclosed and transcribed in newsletters. Once they had been passed along, they were usually transcribed into commonplace books. Commonplace books were shared among friends, copied and recopied. These kinds of practices prolonged the scandal, transforming items into

⁵⁹ See John Donne’s satires, for example.

artifacts of recent history—reminders of where the Stuart court had been, and perhaps, sinister guides to where it might be going (111). The Overbury scandal, for example, generated an unprecedented number of libels. As audiences began to transcribe some of the information into commonplace books, they sometimes added their own comments and observations. They became judges rather than passive observers of the action.

Broadsides are an important genre to consider because they illustrate the way that information was disseminated and received. Like pamphlets, broadsides were inexpensive enough for a broad and socially diverse audience to afford (Bellamy 126). According to Lucinda Becker, street ballads that were often printed as broadsides were the “conduct manuals for the lower classes” (11). Authorities were concerned about the information that was being distributed through broadside publications. They tried to restrict what could be published, but they began to lose control over the information that was being relayed to the public. Bellamy reports that “by 1616 [authorities] could not easily control or halt or impose their version of events” (132).

Broadsides often evolved into a virtual literary underground, a zone of critical discussion beyond the capacity of the authorities to police (132). All of this was a relatively new phenomenon that reached its peak between 1580-1630. These were critical years because of the print technology and the cultural climate that led to the acceleration and development of “news mongering” (132). For example, the courts could not control the discussion of Carr. The more they tried to police the discussion, the more attention they called to it, so they ultimately decided to let it go, “for one book might breed another; and so, they whom it concerned should never be at rest” (qtd. in Bellamy 134). Bellamy notes that in order to understand the scandal, we need to see it as THEY

saw it, and in order to do that, we need to know about this genre. Understanding the genre can help us recreate the social situation. Libels were a step below a pamphlet genre. They were a source of information for the lower class, and they were often illegal. Bellamy calls them “literary bastards” (113).

Conduct Manuals

If libels were “literary bastards,” then conduct manuals represent the opposite end of the genre spectrum. Conduct manuals presented instructions regarding the proper way to conduct one’s life. The seventeenth century “delighted in conduct books as no century before them had” (Ustic 409). Until recently, however, conduct manuals have not been the subject of serious inquiry.

In the 1930s, Chilton Powell felt he had to justify his research into the conduct manual genre. In his research into conduct literature, he insinuated that although conduct books were of “no literary value,” they could offer insight into Milton’s tracts on divorce, and that information would make Powell’s research important and grant it some degree of respect because then the research would be connected to literature (124). Conduct books, then, could offer researchers marginal information of the era, but they offered no other value. Powell describes conduct books in this way:

As a rule, then, the style of the domestic book is pretty flat, pedantic, heavy. It reminds one of the atmosphere of a Puritan household: the author or father is tremendously serious, texts fly about, the fate of the family seems to hang momentarily in the balance, now and then there is a sally at those who would take Sunday to walk in the Mall, less often a softening of tone over some remembered incident; but on the whole life is earnest, if not real, for this household; God is

watching overhead ready to descend in his wrath at the first slip by any one of its members from the narrow path, and the devil is waiting in ambush hoping to trip the unwary. (142)

Powell admits that conduct manuals have been “almost entirely neglected” (viii) and says the origin of conduct books “cannot be accurately determined.” Powell claims that there is “little controversial writing” in domestic literature (except about divorce). He describes conduct manuals as having four principal subjects as their focus moved from the court to the home: 1) discussion of the marriage state; 2) legal elements involved in contracting matrimony; 3) mutual relations of husband and wife; and 4) government of the family, including housekeeping, raising children, management of servants, and general household economics (101-102)

Conduct manuals are difficult to define because they are, during the renaissance and early modern periods, so diverse. They are often conflated with courtesy manuals and instruction manuals. For example, Cicero’s *De Officio* is instruction to his son about how to perform his duty. It is in the form of a letter. James’s *Basilikon Doron His Maiesties Instrvctions to his Dearest Sonne, Henry the Prince* is a book of instruction to James’s son, but the manual was published in England shortly before James appeared in London as England’s new King. It was read, quoted, summarized, paraphrased, and applied by readers for nearly one hundred years. Castiglione writes about how a gentleman should behave in society. Nicollo Machiavelli offers instructions on how to be a prince. Juan Luis Vives’ manual for Henry VIII’s daughter Mary, *De Institutione Feminae Christianae* reached a wide audience, and it had tremendous effect on society in

general due to the ideas of humanism that it included. William Perkins' book *The Art of Prophesying* is a conduct manual for preachers.

In *Learning to Behave*, Susan Newton claims that scholars of the conduct manual have "faced the difficult task of discovering the conduct book in its obscure place on the library shelf where it has often been disguised as a text on etiquette or education of women or homemaking or child-rearing or civility" (8). In order to locate conduct manuals, scholars must "drop into a taxonomic slough" and sort through all kinds of advice literature (5). She defines a conduct book as a text that is intended for "inexperienced young adult or other youthful reader, that includes gender role definitions. [It] encourages ideal conduct in white, generally middle-class children, young men, or young women. . . codifying society's idealized expectations in regard to proper behavior in life" (Newton 4). That is the technical definition. However, in the early seventeenth century, there is a new audience: a newly literate public. Conduct manuals also began to be addressed to women, to servants and even to children. Leigh's manual is addressed to her sons who are "just coming into the world" as she is going out (see Leigh Chapter 1).

Helen Rozovsky separates the spiritual conduct manual from other kinds of conduct manuals. She claims that a spiritual conduct book is often addressed to a universal audience. Its goal is success in the next world, not this one, and its form is drawn from biblical commentary (9)

One popular type of conduct manual that is particularly important to my purposes (and similar to the spiritual conduct manual) is the "dying parent" legacy. This type of manual was written by a dying parent, usually the last surviving parent. It was dramatically framed by the imminent death of the parent. This might include Walter

Raleigh's *Instructions to his Sonne, and to Posterity*, written while he was awaiting his execution in the Tower of London (written before 1618 and published in 1632). In it, Raleigh tells his son that the fancies of men change, as well as their affections. His son should never trust a friend or servant with any matter pertaining to his estate. Raleigh tells his sons to marry pretty women because then his son can at least leave behind good-looking children. He writes: "I wish thee above all the rest, have a care thou doest not marry an uncomely Woman for any respect, comeliness in Children is riches" (qtd. in Ustic 435).

Another subgenre is the "mother's legacy" (Heller 604). It is similar to the "dying parent," except it focuses specifically on the mother and her intimate connection to her offspring. This genre includes Dorothy Leigh's *The Mothers Blessing*, Elizabeth Jocelin's *The Mothers Legacie, To her Vnborne Childe*. In contrast to the conduct literature written by men, manuals written by women are usually seen as more intimate and private.

Dorothy Leigh's conduct manual was the most popular conduct manual written by a woman in the entire seventeenth century.⁶⁰ Especially in the first half of the century, early modern readers were buying *The Mothers Blessing*, reading it, and interpreting it. Ethos forges a bond between Leigh and her audience through shared experiences and shared cultural expectations.

As an author, Leigh demonstrates intellectual ability and an acute sense of audience awareness. I argue that the second half of her writing constitutes a series of sermons. I hope to challenge the definition of "sermon" in the coming chapters. But first, I return to the early chapters of *The Mothers Blessing* in order to illustrate how in

⁶⁰ See Feroili (89)

clear, postlapsarian English prose, Leigh confronts one of the most controversial pamphlets of the early seventeenth century, Joseph Swetnam's *The Araignment of Lewd, Idle, Froward and Unconstant Women*.

CHAPTER 4

CROSSING SWORDS WITH SWETNAM

O judgment, thou art fled to brutish beasts, / And men have lost their reason.

Julius Caesar 3.2.109-110

The Mothers Blessing has been ignored, misinterpreted, or briefly glossed over by most scholars, who see it as a “domestic advice” book. However, it is a complex document. *The Mothers Blessing* reveals a rhetorically astute author who engages contemporary religious, political, and social debates. One socially disruptive pamphlet was *The Araignment of Lewd, Idle, Froward, and Unconstant Women* (1615). The author, fencing master Joseph Swetnam, reignited the *querelle des femmes* (the debate about women) that had been going on for centuries but had recently died down (Boleyn 39). *The Araignment* was an immediate and enduring commercial success (Butler v). Although the debate was not new, the number of responses that Swetnam’s pamphlet generated *was* new. In this chapter, I argue that Leigh’s writing should be seen as one of the first responses to Swetnam’s pamphlet.

My methodology consists of placing *The Mothers Blessing* next to *The Araignment* and doing a close reading of both texts. I analyze Leigh’s engagement with Swetnam’s pamphlet, noting her arguments. My goal in this chapter is to illustrate how effectively Leigh dismantles Swetnam’s claims. To that end, I first explain my rationale for choosing Swetnam’s pamphlet as a comparison text for Leigh. Then because his text is somewhat unfamiliar to many, I briefly summarize *The Araignment*. Finally, I point out specific instances in which I see Leigh responding to Swetnam’s writing, noting particularly the mother-based strategies that lead to Leigh’s credibility with her audience.

Rationale for *The Araignment*

Joseph Swetnam's, *The Araignment of Lewd, Idle, Froward, and Unconstant Women* (1616) was a particularly disruptive early modern pamphlet. Deidre Boleyn states that the "Swetnam Controversy" lasted primarily between the years of 1615 and 1620. She describes the pamphlet as "a Jacobean addition to *the querelle des femmes*, a genre rooted in medieval, continental, scholastic soil, which was fed by classical satire on women, most obviously *Satire 6* from Juvenal's *Satires*, Aristotelian, and patristic ideas about the nature of women" (39). Boleyn claims that by 1615 the debate had died down considerably until Swetnam published his pamphlet. She also notes that writers who participated in these kinds of "exercises of wit" sometimes attacked and defended the identical position purely for rhetorical showmanship. The uniqueness of Swetnam's pamphlet, she stresses, lies in its "startling success" (49).

She emphasizes that critical and historical interest in the "Swetnam Controversy" began with an investigation into early modern reading habits and culture, "which brought recognition of the startling success of *The Araignment* and of its place as a bestseller in the early modern literary marketplace" (49). Early modern reading habits caused researchers to excavate Swetnam's writing and interpret it in all of its "carnavalesque misogyny" (Luckyj "A Mouzell" 116). To balance their new find, critics also excavated comparison texts, namely Rachel Speght's *A Mouzell for Melastromus* (1617), Constantinia Munda's *The Worming of a Mad Dogge* (1617), and Ester Sowerman's *Ester Hath Hang'd Haman* (1617). An anonymously written play, *Swetnam, the Woman-hater, arraigned by women* (1620), also appears occasionally as a response to *The Araignment*. However, the balancing act among these texts appears disproportionate. If

we look to the reading public's reading habits, we find that each of the comparison texts was published *only once*. In contrast, *The Araignment* went through twenty-one editions and at least one Dutch translation between 1615 and 1733 (Butler v). Leigh's *Mothers Blessing* was published approximately twenty-three times during approximately the same time span.

Rachel Speght's *A Mouzell for Melastromus* is usually touted as the first "female-authored" text to respond directly to Swetnam (Lewalski 156). However, there is reason to question this claim. Not all texts overtly name the text to which they directly respond. Speght is given prominence for a couple of reasons. First, she directly engages Swetnam. Second, she is female. Despite those reasons Dorothy Liegh's writing is a more rational text for comparison to *The Araignment*.

First, critics like to showcase Speght because she directly attacks Swetnam. However, not all rhetors name their rhetorical opponents. For example, Daniel Tuvil's *Asylum Veneris: or, A Sanctuary for Ladies* (1616) may be intended partly as a rebuttal of Swetnam's arguments (Butler xxi-xxiii), but Tuvil never names Swetnam. In addition, some of the pamphlets in the pamphlet wars I reference in Chapter 1 do not directly identify their "opponent" pamphlet. Instead, writers trusted that the reading public would make the connections. James made a similar move in 1616. In his "Speech in the Star Chamber," he criticized Sir Edward Coke without ever mentioning Coke's name: "Another sort of Justices are busie-bodies, and will have all men dance after their pipe, and follow their greatnesse, or else will not be content. . . . These proud spirits must know, that the country is ordained to obey and follow GOD and the King, and not them" (qtd. in Sommerville, "James I" 222). James expected everyone to know that he aimed

his criticism directly at Coke. In the same way, perhaps not all respondents to Swetnam identified him specifically in their writing. Leigh did not have to name Swetnam to engage his writing. She expected audiences to make the connections. I illustrate numerous opportunities to see the relationship between the texts later in this chapter.

Second, Speght is supposedly the first *female* to respond to Swetnam's pamphlet.⁶¹ Not only is she a female, but she also appears to have received some training in rhetoric, and she publishes a contentious pamphlet, getting down in the ring with Swetnam, so to speak, to argue against Swetnam's claims and to attack Swetnam personally. Swetnam's pamphlet is also unique in the number of responses that it generated. Perhaps some respondents chose not to encounter Swetnam in the ring. In this chapter, I argue that Leigh refuses to stoop to Swetnam's contentious and "carnavalesque" level in responding to his pamphlet. She chooses the conduct manual genre, and she never mentions his name. In that way, she answers him with a form of silence. Indeed, any direct reference to Swetnam could have potentially damaged Leigh's credibility. Women had to carve out an appropriate space to respond, or they could be branded as scolds (Butler xxi-xxiii).

I am not claiming that *The Mothers Blessing* is first and foremost, or even exclusively, a response to *The Araigment*. Rather, I argue that Leigh was more than likely aware of Swetnam's popular pamphlet and that her writing is partly a response to his pamphlet. Swetnam's pamphlet represents a significant social discourse that was being played out in early modern print. Leigh would probably have been concerned by Swetnam's pamphlet, especially its misogynist depiction of women and its potential

⁶¹ Munda and Sowerman are probably pseudo names and not female authors. Speght is the only positively identified female respondent to Swetnam out of the three first responders that are usually listed.

influence on young men, most notably motherless young men who would need direction to maneuver through the “silent” dangers that lay ahead.

The Araignment is a suitable comparison text for *The Mothers Blessing* for several reasons. First, both publications went through approximately the same number of editions. In fact, in the first half of the seventeenth century, Leigh’s manual went through more editions than Swetnam’s pamphlet did. The “startling success” of Swetnam’s pamphlet indicated a wide readership. Swetnam’s writing has since then become routinely anthologized and accepted into the “canon,” usually under the banner of gender debates.⁶² Dorothy Leigh’s writing was at least as widely read as Swetnam’s, and it also clearly enters gender debates, yet *The Mothers Blessing* is still widely ignored. Apparently, the early modern reading public valued her writing, as shown by the number of editions *The Mothers Blessing* went through. As I point out in Chapter 5, publishers and audiences saw her writing as being in conversation with other popular contemporary texts.

Second, both Leigh and Swetnam engage in early modern gender-centered discourse. Leigh’s manual is a gendered “response” to Swetnam. The standard procedure of most early modern anthologies is to include portions of Swetnam’s pamphlet along with portions of Speght, Munda, and Sowerman because those writers claim to be women responding to Swetnam. Boleyn argues that focusing exclusively on the gender of the author limits interpretive capabilities. Because Speght is a female who directly attacks Swetnam, the names of Swetnam and Speght are nearly always mentioned in tandem. Leigh seems to be a much more logical choice. She shares many

⁶² For example, *the Norton Anthology of English Literature* (8th Edition) includes selections from Joseph Swetnam and from Rachel Speght (pages 1544-1550) under the head of *The Gender Wars*.

characteristics with Speght. Leigh and Speght both mix genres in order to sermonize.⁶³ Both Leigh and Speght were published shortly after Swetnam published. Leigh published 1616, and Speght published a year later in 1617. Leigh and Speght are both women with ties to Essex and militant Puritanism.

Also, Speght was probably familiar with Leigh's best-selling publication. However, in contrast to Speght, Leigh's manual circulated at least as widely as Swetnam's pamphlet, whereas Speght's pamphlet went through one edition only. Further, the mother's legacy genre was becoming the latest trend, as a cluster of mother's manuals around 1620 attests (Brown 24). In *The Mothers Blessing* Leigh strongly encourages women to write.⁶⁴ Speght may have gathered courage to respond to Swetnam *after* reading Leigh's advice to write. In any case, Leigh's writing provides a compelling choice for comparison to Swetnam. It presents a much more balanced approach in many ways. Speght was the eighteen-year-old daughter of a minister. Her attackers claimed she was young and lacked experience about marriage and the role of a woman. Leigh, on the other hand, was a widowed mother of three children writing at the end of a long and pious life.

Third, Swetnam and Leigh share several themes, tropes, and figures. Boelyn has identified "turning" as a major rhetorical strategy that early modern writers and audiences would recognize. In *Reason and Rhetoric in the Philosophy of Hobbes*, Quentin Skinner explains that "turning" is a rhetorical device in which a writer shares common terms with

⁶³ In "Women, Social History, and the English Renaissance," Linda Woodbridge asserts that the renaissance was notorious for mixing genre (67).

⁶⁴ This is a highly unusual exhortation. In the early years of the Reformation on the continent (1560s), Marie Dentiere, a pioneer of the Reformation and a former Augustinian Abbess began writing to encourage women to write and speak out. Geneva authorities were not pleased, and no further writings by women were published in the city during the sixteenth century (MacCullough 658).

another writer, but the responding writer uses a different connotation for the terms sometimes resulting in contextual changes that startle the reader. However, the writer expects the reader to make inter-textual connections between the texts. Boelyn points to instances of “turning” that Munda uses against Swetnam. She argues that “turning” in Munda’s *Worming of a Mad Dogge* is meant to signal the inter-textuality of the writing. It was part of the witty exhibitions of writing. Munda “turns” phrases back onto Swetnam and uses them to argue against Swetnam’s own arguments, and even though not “every [wo]man had the means to visit Corinth” (Erasmus, *De Copia* 597), Leigh read widely and was literate. Literate readers were expected to make and appreciate the inter-textual connections. Moreover, recognizing instances of “turning” did not require a classical education.

Skinner defines rhetoric as “a distinctive set of linguistic techniques derived from the rhetorical doctrines of *inventio*, *dispositio*, and *elocutio*, the three principal elements in classical and Renaissance theories of eloquence” (6). *Elocutio* included the technique of “turning.” Later in this chapter, I point to numerous specific instances of Leigh “turning” phrases and terms back on Swetnam, similar to what Boelyn observes happening in Munda’s writing. Leigh’s strategic “turning” helps her build credibility as a writer. By consistently “turning” to ungendered biblical rather than classical sources and by constantly drawing on her authority as a mother, she constructs an evolving ethos that brings Swetnam’s misogyny into stark contrast with Leigh’s logic. Leigh strengthens her position without ever descending into the bawdy, outwardly public sphere of “giddy-headed” and “idle” young men (Swetnam 1).

Finally, the most compelling reason for using *The Araignment* as a comparison text to *The Mothers Blessing* is because Swetnam's pamphlet presents us with an opportunity to test Luckyj's theory, namely to interpret a best-selling female-authored text using the same lens that critics use for a best-selling male-authored text that treats the same themes. Gray sees Leigh's writing as "mildly" seditious (56). According to Luckyj, if Leigh were a male, her writing would possibly be interpreted as highly seditious. There is specific evidence that Leigh's contemporaries interpreted Leigh's writing as politically important during England's critical pre-civil war years. One acknowledged seditious text cites Leigh's *Mothers Blessing* as its source. In *A Mothers Teares ouer hir seduced sonne: Or A dissuasive from idolatry* the anonymous author begins with these lines:

There are two books that goe under a mothers name; *A Mothers Blessing*; [and] *A Mothers Legacie*. Now thou see'st *A Mothers Teares*. And this last contains all. In this a sorrowful Mother weeps for her Child, laments for her Child, and cannot bee comforted, because he is not; In this a sorrowfull Mother pleads for her Child, begs for her Child, prays for her child; . . . according to the patterne of wholesome words, call it, *A Mothers Blessing*. And because thy Mother. . . worn out with yeares and teares, is now lying downe in sorrow, and not likely to see thy face. . . [she] bequeaths this . . . her last will and Testament. (A2)

In this passage, the author credits *The Mothers Blessing* as being a "patterne of wholesome words." The other text referenced is Elizabeth Jocelin's *A Mothers Legacie* (1622), which was written by a young mother to her unborn child.⁶⁵ Jocelin died in childbirth, and her *Mothers Legacie* was published after her death. The anonymously

⁶⁵ Jocelin's *Mother's Legacie* went through eight editions (Teague 258).

authored pamphlet's reference to Leigh's *The Mothers Blessing* is evidence that Leigh "moved" at least one contemporary author to write. Published in 1627, the London edition of *A Mothers Teares* was considered dangerous enough that the name of the author and publisher were omitted. The gender of the author can only be guessed.

Although gender plays a role in my comparison of texts, I focus mainly on the social, political, and religious context. When I say "social, political, and religious," I would like to point out that I see all three of these categories as overlapping, as they did in early modern times. On many levels, social discourse *was* religious discourse, and religious discourse *was* political discourse. For purposes of my analysis of Leigh's writing, I separate them into these categories to make the material more manageable. By necessity, much of the discourse overlaps the boundaries of my imposed categories. Swetnam's "startlingly popular" pamphlet is an excellent place to begin an analysis of Leigh's engagement with social discourse.

Summary and Analysis of Swetnam's Pamphlet

First published under the name of Tome Tell-Troth, *The Araigment of Lewd, idle, forward, and unconstant woment* was quickly identified as being written by Joseph Swetnam, a Bristol fencing master (Butler vii).⁶⁶ It is a particularly comprehensive attack on women "combined with an unprecedented level of vituperation" (Butler vi). Swetnam's book, "sarcastic in its ridicule, was by far the most popular and oft reprinted" of the *Querrelle des femmes* pamphlets (Hull 23). He portrayed women as

⁶⁶ In 1617, Swetnam wrote *The School of the Noble and Worthy Science of Defence*, a manual of instruction about fencing. He claims that he was the tutor of James's son Prince Henry and that although it was not published until after Henry died (He died in 1612), Swetnam maintains that Henry requested the publication (Luckyj "A Mouzell" 116).

nagging, disobedient, garrulous, overdressed, oversexed, drunken, and bawdy.

Commentators note that Swetnam's writing is "pretty feeble stuff" (Jones 45), "verbal diarrhea" (Woodbridge 83) and that his writing created an uproar. They state that it is incoherent in places, often disorganized, lacking in any kind of logical argumentative structure, and they note that he opens himself to attacks. Most of his information comes from commonplace writings kept in notebooks and then passed on. It seems to be written for the "entertainment value of the controversy" (Schnell 63).

The *Araignment* begins by inviting the audience to see the "Beare-bayting of women." Swetnam advises women not to read further because they may "bark more at [him] than Cerberus the two-headed dog did at Hercules," and "if they shoot their spite at [him], they may hit themselves, and so [he] will smile at them, as the foolish Fly which burneth her selfe in the candle" (1).

The book is divided into three chapters and then an "exhibition" entitled "the bearebayting, or the vanity of widdowes." Chapter 1 explains why women were created and what a hindrance they are to the human race. He quips that woman was created a "helper" to man, and "so they are indeed; for she helpeth to spend and consume that which man painfully getteth." She was also created from the "ribbe of man. . . a crooked thing, good for nothing else, and women are crooked by nature: for small occasion will cause them to be angry (2). Women are described as "a panted ship, which seemeth faire outwardly, & yet nothing but ballace within her; or as the Idolls in Spaine, which are bravely gilt outwardly, and yet nothing but lead within them" (4).

Chapter 2 explains that the beauty of women overcomes men to men's destruction, and "women devour men alive: for a woman will pick thy pocket, and empty

thy purse, laught in thy face and cut thy throat: they are ungratefull, periured, full of fraud, flouting and deceit, unconstant, waspish, toyish, light, sullen, proud, discourteous and cruell” (17). This chapter, like other chapters, presents narratives from classical and biblical accounts of wicked women.

Chapter 3 claims to be a remedy against love with instructions for choosing a wife, but ultimately it relates that a man cannot choose a good wife because such a wife does not exist:

If thou mariest a still and a quiet woman, that will seeme to thee that thou ridest but an ambling horse to hell; but if with one that is forward and unquiet, then thou wert as good ride a trotting horse to the devil. . . It is said of men, that they have that one fault, but of women it is said they have two faults, that is to say, they can neither say well, nor do well. (36)

He includes numerous examples about how women waste money and cause problems for men. He claims that he does not care if he offends women.

The final chapter deals with widows. His stories draws from classical and biblical sources that are familiar tales handed down through other misogynist traditions. Swetnam relates that “one [man] having married with a forward widow, she called him thief and many other unhappy names; so he took her and cut the tongue out of her head, but she ever afterwards would make the sign of the gallows with her fingers to him” (60).

In his conclusion, he apologizes for offering his advice too late for those who are already married. He was only joking, he claims. He tells his readers to “take it merrily” and to “esteeme of this booke onely as the toyes of an idle head” (64). He begins and ends *The Araignment* with an image of idleness. Idleness was roundly condemned by

Protestants, and by openly admitting his idleness, Swetnam opens himself up to a barrage of criticism from Protestants who consider idleness a sin. Idleness is clearly one of Leigh's main concerns, and it offers Leigh her first point of engagement with Swetnam.

Engaging Swetnam

Both Swetnam and Leigh begin their texts with a discussion of the consequences of idleness. For Swetnam, idleness leads to writing *The Araignment*. His wits were gone "wool-gathering," and he had no better way to spend his time. For Leigh, idleness leads to the main obstacles in climbing "the hill to heaven" (1). Both writers use the bee image to make their introductory points.

"Labour" and Idleness

Swetnam claims his audience is "neither the wisest Clarke, not yet . . . the starkest Foole, but. . . the ordinary sort of giddy-headed young men." He invites the giddy-headed young men to come and see the "bear-baying of women." He says that "lascivious and crafty, whorish, thievish, & knavish women" cause him to spend his "idle time" as "the simple Bee [gathering] honey where the venomous Spider doth [gather] her poison." He compares women to bees: "I have sought for honey, & caught the Bee by the tayle . . . [and] been "stung" by them. For Swetnam, the whole endeavor is a form of entertainment, a way to pass the idle time of the reader and the writer. He implicates himself as one of the shiftless and giddy-headed young men. He claims that women are like bees that sting, but he also claims that he is the bee who goes out to gather honey and gets stung in the process. This is typical of the garbled images that he constructs. One of the many criticisms that respondents fling at him is that his writing lacks organization and focus. Rachel Speght (1617) describes *The Araignment* as "pestiferous obtrectation. . .

like a Taylers Cushion, that is botcht together of shreddees” (*A Mouzell for Melastomus*).⁶⁷
The garbled syntax creates a great deal of confusion.

Leigh alludes to idleness and bees as well in the opening sections of her manual. She fears that there are many who are idle and angry. However, her book is not dedicated to them, but instead, it is dedicated to Elizabeth, the daughter of James, and wife of the Count Palatine of the Rhine. Elizabeth was the “ideal” mother and champion of the Protestants. Immediately, Leigh distances herself from any giddiness or idleness. The dedication is an example of Leigh’s maternal authority statement. She associates her maternal identity and concern with Elizabeth’s maternal reputation as the ideal maternal Protestant. Leigh begins the *Blessing* by presenting herself as a mother “troubled and wearied with feare.” Her main concern is that her children “find the right way to heaven.” Rather than seeking for some way to spend “idle” time, she meditates and “[thinks] within herself” what she could do. She decides to “write them the right way.” She ends the *proem* with a poem about a “labourous bee.” She compares the labourous bee to an idle bee:

But this I much and oft desire,
that you would doe for mee,
To gather honey of each flower,
so doth the labourour Bee. . .
. . . where she finds it, there she works,
and gets the wholemsome food,
, , , and beares it home, and layes it up,
to doe her Country good,

⁶⁷ The quote is found in an unnumbered section of *A Mouzell for Malestomus*, titled “To The Reader.”)

And for to serve her self at need
when winter doth begin:
When storm and tempest is without,
then she doth find within.
A sweet and pleasant wholesome food,
a house to keepeh her warme,
A place where softly she may rest,
and be kept from all harme.
Except the Bee that idle is
and seekes too soone for rest,
Before she filled hath her house
whereby her state is blest.” (10)

Leigh describes the idle bee who rests too soon, and then regrets it when storms, tempests, and winter blasts come. *That* bee looks out and sees death, but it is too late. Her poem represents the Protestant work ethic. Christopher Hill has concluded that Protestants focused all of their energies on the Protestant work ethic, which represented the class struggles between the gentleman who did not have to work (viewed as being lazy) and the industrious middle-class worker (*The World* 325). Leigh continues:

Therefore see you noridle be,
this I would have you know,
Be sure still that the ground be good,
whereout the Plant doth grow:
Then gather well and lose no time,

take heed now you doe see,
Lest you be unprovided found,
as was the idle Bee.” (10)

Leigh’s bee is industrious. Her bee has no time for idleness or “wool-gathering” wits. The bee image transcends gender. *All* should gather supplies against the storms, and in so doing, they build the common-wealth. Idleness has no place in the Protestant Common-wealth. Swetnam’s admission of idleness places him in company with the Libertines (Hill, *The World* 326) and giddy-headed young men (Swetnam 1).

Leigh discusses the consequences of the idle individual who “loyters.” At the conclusion of the introductory poem, Leigh explains that individuals must diligently gather manna, the spiritual food from heaven.⁶⁸ They must gather *sentences*, or *sententiae*, or words of truth found mainly in the scriptures. They must never “loyter.” She says, “This is the cause why I write unto you, that you might never “loyter.” She warns, “Many there bee that labour the cleane contrary way, for they leave Christ, and take hold of traditions: and a number loyter, and by that meanes never get hold of Christ” (15). Leigh presents her *maternal motivation* as the mother whose constant concern is the welfare of her children and the “common-wealth.” She also presents *maternal authority statements* by quoting exclusively from the Bible. Her authority is not classical but biblical: *Labour therefore, that you may come unto Christ*” (Leigh 15).

The image of the bee was common in early modern literature as seen in Virgil’s *Georgics*. Swetnam probably drew his image from the medieval *Romance of the Rose*.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ In the Old Testament, manna fell from heaven for the children of Israel to eat. It had to be gathered daily, and it represented the Word of God. See Exodus 16.

⁶⁹ *La Roman de las Rose (The Romance of the Rose)* was composed in approximately 1230 by Jean de Meun. It is a tale of courtly love, an allegory of romance between a lover and the Rose, symbolizing a man

Leigh redirects the image away from the medieval interpretation, and to an interpretation drawn from early modern discourse. Early modern readers may have recalled William Perkins's *Christian Oeconomie: Or, A short survey of the right manner of erecting and ordering a familie according to the scriptures* (1609). Perkins claims that the family is "the first society in nature, and the ground of all the rest." He notes that some have compared the "familie" to "the Bee hive. . . wherein are bred many swarmes, which thence doe flie abroad into the world, to the raising and maintaining of other States." He reminds readers that "others" properly compare the family to a "mother citie," which "traineth up her native inhabitants, and then. . . removeth some of them to other places of abode, where they may be framed as members, to live in obedience to the laws of their Head."

Images of bees, mothers, and industriousness are prominent in Perkins's definitions of the family and the commonwealth. Perkins goes on to show that the family is the model of order for both the church and the commonwealth and that the "laws thereof being rightly informed and religiously observed, are available to prepare and dispose men to the keeping of order in other governments." From scripture, men learn "examples for imitation, to Husbands and Wives, to Parents and Children, to Masters and Servants," examples or where they learn principles of "authoritie and subjection."

Also, the act of gathering *sententiae* was like the bee gathering honey. Erasmus compared his students to bees out gathering and organizing moral commonplaces. In order to be prepared for the future, his scholars needed an abundance of ideas and words, and they needed to organize them so they could recall them in times of need. Leigh takes

(lover) and a woman (the Rose). It was an influential advisory tale that caused one of the first literary wars involving the role and dignity of women.

Erasmus's image of gathering profound and profitable sayings and applies it to gathering "spiritual manna." In contrast to Leigh, Swetnam appears disorganized and overly emotional. In *Orator*, Cicero describes the dangers of becoming too emotional:

But the copious speaker, if he has nothing else, seems to be scarcely sane. For a man who can say nothing calmly and mildly, who pays no attention to arrangement, precision, clarity or pleasantry—especially when some cases have to be handled entirely in this latter style, and others, largely so—if without first preparing the ears of his audience he begins trying to work them up to fiery passion, he seems to be a raving madman among the sane, like a drunken reveler in the midst of sober men. (343)

Swetnam appears disorganized and plunges like a madman into a passionate and fiery condemnation of all women. In comparison, Leigh appears logical and sensible. She draws on a wide array of the industrious bee image and subtly invites readers to include Swetnam's bee images, too. He set himself up for this, and Leigh did not need to use his name in order for people to make the connections. She silently redirects readers to the image of the industrious bee rather than the idle bee. Her "carefull" writing illustrates maternal ethos. She appears credible and sensible, illustrating her good will, good character, and good sense. Even as Swetnam is "arraigning" women, Leigh is offering "blessings" from the women, even the same women Swetnam arraigns. If audiences made any kind of connection between the two texts, then the comparison increases Leigh's credibility.

Writing and Silence

One of the characteristics that separates Leigh's *Mothers Blessing* from other conduct manuals of the early seventeenth century is her plea that her readers write. Taking up the pen is important to her for many reasons. Calvinist doctrine encouraged all individuals to examine their lives for signs of being one of the elect who were saved in God's kingdom. Calvinist doctrine suggested that individuals should search their lives for signs of being the elect, so they were encouraged to keep spiritual autobiographies as evidence of their spiritual election. Writing is one of their main themes.

In one passage about writing, however, Leigh appears to rephrase one of Swetnam's analogies. She "turns" his image, shifting the focus from Swetnam's gendered and irreverent images to a firmly grounded Christian view, and she always backs up her claims with scriptural references. In this phrase she shifts the focus from the condemnation of *women* to the condemnation of *sin*. The phrasing is parallel.

Swetnam claims:

If all the world were paper, and all the sea inke, and all the trees and plants were pens, and every man in the world were a writer, yet were they not able with all their labor and cunning to set down all the crafty deceits of women. (34)

There is not time enough and room. Women are too corrupt. No matter how much a man wants to, Swetnam argues that man will never be able to get it all down. In contrast,

Leigh writes:

If all the sea were ink, and all the iron in the world were pens, and all the creatures writers, they could never declare the great benefits, the great blessings,

and the great mercies given unto us in Christ Jesus our lord and Savior. . . And yet there are many that are angry” (15).

Both Swetnam and Leigh compare the sea to ink, and both discuss “pens” that use ink. For Swetnam, all trees and plants become pens. For Leigh, all iron becomes pens. Swetnam imagines all “men” as writers. Leigh imagines all “creatures” as writers. She specifically includes women in other sections of *The Mothers Blessing*. Both agree that their writers would not be able to write all of their findings. Swetnam claims that women have too many faults to document, and Leigh claims that Christ has too many mercies to document. Leigh’s analogy shifts the focus from the *faults of women* to the *mercies of Christ*.

The context of both analogies comes in response to study. Swetnam says that if men studied for one thousand years, they could never find a woman who was anything except contrary to a man. Even if men continued to study for an additional hundred years past the initial thousand years, they would find only new fancies and new contrary sorts of behavior in women. Leigh says that people need to study. Indeed, they need to find time to read and study good books. Those who cannot find leisure to read and do not love sermons love the “earth” and are always talking about earthly things, and they are often ignorant and angry (95).

To conclude his analogy, Swetnam uses a chain of logic about the path that leads to sorrow for women. Women will do anything for gifts. If men give them gifts, then their young wits are easily corrupted by vanity. Vanity makes them servants to love. Love changes customs of modesty into passions of vanity, and vanity leads away from

repentance and sorrow. So Swetnam uses a circular logic. The gifts appeal to vanity, which makes women have more vanity.

In contrast, Leigh uses circular logic that leads to the mercies of God. She claims that those who are angry do not love to write good books or hear sermons. They have no leisure and less desire to pray. Hearing sermons and reading good books lead to prayer, and prayer leads to the mercy of God. The mercy of God leads to the desire to hear sermons and read good books—and to write good books. She uses a circular logic that returns back always to the mercy of God.

Both analogies share multiple similarities. Leigh's images contrast starkly with the images Swetnam presents, and in each case, Leigh's credibility is strengthened in comparison because of her appeal to maternal motivation. Leigh claims that many godly books are eaten by moths in men's chests. Men are ignoring them (5). Swetnam has a chest, or trunk, too. It is not filled with good books. Rather, it is a "trunk full of torments against women." He says that it might be best to drive all women out hearing range before he opens his "trunk" because men can be persuaded with reason, but "women must be answered with silence." Then, in opposition to his own advice to remain silent, he opens his trunk of "torments." He knows that women will "shoot their spite at [him]." He claims that he will remain silent *then*, and "smile" at them, as he would at the foolish fly that flies into the candle.

There are some notable contrasts to point out here. Swetnam opens his "chest of torments." He cannot be silent because he's been wronged. Leigh knows that there are many godly books in men's chests. However, she can't be silent because of the danger she sees ahead, and the danger is silent. Swetnam appears to lose control of himself and

let his wits wander. He knows it, but he allows it to happen. Leigh has immense self discipline. She writes in spite of those who would “blush” at her boldness” (17).

Swetnam knows some will attack him. They do. Leigh knows some may attack her. I have not found any of Leigh’s contemporaries who condemned her writing. Swetnam intends to hurt people (women). Leigh attempts to help people. He disparages women. She praises God. Everything Leigh does, especially in contrast to Swetnam, builds her maternal ethos. She does not look for her own praise. Instead, she seeks the welfare of others. This shows good will. Leigh is articulate and aware of contemporary arguments, and she joins them. This shows good sense. She is “carefull” and “faithful” in her executing her duties. This shows good character, acting in a way that the audience would approve.

One of the most prominent images to represent controlling the tongue was that of a bridle. The bridle tames an unruly colt. Both Swetnam and Leigh draw on the unruly colt image, the idea of the horse needing to be tamed and the importance of the bridle. For Swetnam, the image of the bridled colt applies to women in a couple of ways. First, a woman’s tongue is unruly and needs to be bridled and even “roughly used” in order to curb it: “A sharp bit curbs a stubborn horse, even so a curst woman must be roughly used. . . Beasts are made tame by man, but not a woman’s tongue. It’s a small thing, but it is often heard, to the terror and utter confusion of many a man” (18).

Apparently, even the sharp bit cannot silence the woman. Men seem powerless to do anything about it. He also says that marrying a quiet woman is like riding an ambling horse to hell (16) and marrying a forward and unquiet woman is like riding a trotting horse to the devil (17). He advises men to inspect women like they would a horse. Either

way the man is saddled with a woman that he cannot easily discard. Swetnam reminds men that they cannot always tell the disposition of the horse, and they may be deceived, but they can always get rid of a horse at the next fair. It's not so easy with a wife: "She will stick to thee like the saddle on a horse, and you've got her for better or for worse" (46). Either way, the man is saddled with a woman. No matter what, the man is powerless to change the situation.

Women were often criticized individuals for having "unruly tongues." However, William Perkins removes the gender constraints. In *A direction for the government of the tongue according to Gods word* (1593), he gives instruction for everyone. He claims that the government of the tongue consists of two parts: holy speech and holy silence (7). By way of analogy, he suggests that the tongue is in the middle of the mouth, surrounded by the lips and the teeth, as a "double trench" to remind individuals to think before they speak. He urges all to keep the "key" to the tongue not in the mouth but in the "cupboard of the heart" (12). In this somewhat odd analogy, he points out that the tongue should be ruled by the heart, and then he presents the example of Abigail⁷⁰ whose soft answer to King David covered for her foolish husband's earlier response (60). In Abigail's example, the woman controls her tongue much more successfully than the man. Perkins further claims that those who know foreign tongues have no advantage over those who know only their native language. He writes: "If thou haue many tongues and knowest not howe to use them well: hee which hath but his mother tongue, ordering it aright, is a better linguist then thou" (59).

⁷⁰ Abigail is one of the virtuous women that Leigh references, and one of the women in the acronym of the "reverend and holy fathers"

Leigh follows a similar logic when she changes the focus of the bridle from bridling the *tongue* to bridling an individual's *passions*. Her response is a direct attack on the unruly passions. They must be tamed:

'I know thy nature, thou [passions] art like unto an unruly colt, that if he be pampered, fed, and well kept, he will throw his master under his feet and cares not what become of him, so he may be rid of him, and then he runs whither he list himself, although he fare much worse than he did before. So is it with those that become subject to their affections, they are as hard to be overcome as a wild colt, which many times is like to be and sometimes the utter destruction of his master. Therefore your resolution must be to deal with your stubborn and rebellious affections as you will deal with a pampered wild colt, and say unto them, 'By God's grace, I will not be overmastered by you. I scorn to serve so beggarly and so base a slave as thou art. I will bridle thee and thy headstrong, stout, proud, scornful, and disobedient, untemperate, unholy, high-minded, forward, covetous, and idle disposition; for there is no goodness in you by nature, but by God's grace I will temper you. I will make you humble, patient, chaste, quiet, and diligently to fall to some labor. You shall not be idle, for that will bring you to naught. And this must be the victory betwixt yourselves and your affections' (127-29).

Leigh's source is Saint Paul. Paul says that "passions" need to be bridled, not women. In Leigh's exposition of Paul's example, she expresses *maternal authority* by aligning herself with St Paul and showing a more accurate understanding of Paul's argument than does Swetnam. She portrays herself as a confident mother, armed with a mature understanding of Paul gained through silent meditation.

One of the main “lets” or hindrances to the climb to God, according to Leigh, is the neglect of private meditation. Through meditation, Leigh claims a person learns to master his or her passions. Meditation is a silent, private activity. Silence is critical in both texts. Swetnam says that he cannot be silent: “A wronged man cannot be tongue-tied.” He takes an adversarial, argumentative stance. He claims *all* women as his targets. But even though he cannot be silent, he tells them to be silent:

I know I shall be bitten by many, because I touch many: but before I goe any further, let mee whisper one word in your eares, and that is this: whatsoever you thinke privately, I wish you to conceale it with silence, lest in starting up to find fault, you prove your selves guilty of these monstrous accusations, which are here following. (1)

Leigh, on the other hand, cannot be silent because of the danger that she sees her sons will certainly encounter. Leigh asserts that to be silent would be to put her sons in danger: “If [her sons] took a false way, what a trouble they should have in turning againe, what danger if they went on; and of the many doubts which the world would make without a cause, and how silent it would be in danger” (4) Leigh knows how “silent” danger can be, but silence can also be a “moving rhetoricke” (Brathwait 91). In the *English Gentlewoman* (1631), Richard Brathwait advises women to

Enter your chambers and be still—still, and yet stirring. Still. Still from the clamours and turbulent insults of the world;. . . Make then your chamber your private theatre, where you may act some devout scene to Gods honour. . . Be still from the world, but stirring towards God. Meditation, let it be your companion. It is the perfume of the memory; the souse rouzer from sinnes lethargy. (49)

William Perkins claimed that a fool should be answered in silence (9). Leigh shows wisdom and restraint by a prudent use of silence in several ways. She does not attack Swetnam, as Rachel Speght does. Speght writes, “It is farre more wonder-foole to have one, that adventures to make his writing as publique as an in-keepers sign...[you] join together *women* plurall, and *shee* singular, asse you not only in this place, but also in others have done” (15). In this selection, Speght puns on the word *fool* and *ass*. Speght resorts to name-calling that makes her appear somewhat immature. Leigh is not dispassionate. To the contrary, she includes several emotional pleas. However, there is also a sense of restraint, a sense of balance and maturity in her writing.

Leigh tells others not to be silent; she tells them to follow her example and to write. This was highly unusual. This emphasis sets her apart from the other conduct manuals, even the male-authored conduct manuals (Razovsky 19). It is possible that the surge in women’s writing in the years immediately following 1616 could be partly in response to her popular book. Lady Brillianna Harley certainly read Leigh, and although she did not write a conduct manual, Harley repeated much of Leigh’s advice in the letters she sent her son, Ned, over a five-year span (Anselment 433). Anne Clifford’s well known “Diary of Me” begins in 1616 (Acheson 37). My point is that Leigh encourages women—and indeed everyone—to write, and it is possible that the “surge” in women’s publications in the 1620s was in part a response to her best-selling text.

Ultimately, writing is a silent activity. It often requires meditation. According to Dorothy Leigh, William Perkins, and Richard Brathwait, there is strength in silence, and it is a form of rhetoric. A wise individual knows how to appropriate silence as a “moving rhetorike” (Brathwait 91). A wise individual knows when and how to speak and to whom

to speak. Leigh joins the discourse with Swetnam all the while being silent toward him, and she increases her credibility by doing so. Gathering sententiae and storing it is often a silent activity. The gathered “manna” keeps writers company even when alone.

Erasmus quotes Seneca who wrote, “It seems to me a strong indication of a well-ordered mind to be able to stay at home and keep oneself company” (qtd. in *De Copia* 627).

Leigh professes that because she has knowledge (through the Word), she is never alone. She tells readers that in silence they need not be alone, not when they are in the company of words—even silent, printed words.

Nursing Mothers

One of the first women to be arraigned by Swetnam is the “nursing mother.” Although this might seem strange to us, the “nursing mother” was a popular topic for early modern writers. The fad among upper-class women was to “put” the child out to a wet nurse. Women worried that nursing a baby would make the woman look older and less attractive. It soiled clothing. It was inconvenient. Some women claimed they were too weak (Clinton 15). The poorer class of mothers began to imitate the upper-class mothers and to hire nurses. This caused financial burdens on their families. The defenders of breastfeeding pointed to the selfishness and error of the trend. In *Seven dialogues both pithie and profitable*, Erasmus argued that mothers should nurse their babies.⁷¹ One of the dialogues is referred to as *The Lying-In Mother*. In it, Erasmus attacks the fashion of hiring a nurse. In a dialogue between Fabulla, a lying-in mother, and Eutrapilus, a visiting friend, Eutrapilus reasons with Fabulla reminding her of a mother’s duty to nurture her child. He reasons that it is both unnatural and unhealthy to

⁷¹ Although Erasmus published in Latin, his work was translated into English in several editions. His *Seven dialogues* included specific instructions for mothers, particularly about caring for children.

give the child to a nurse. He claims that “a child needs to breathe the mother’s fragrance.” He explains that the body is the “garment of the soul,” and so the mother who cares for the infant’s body cares also for the soul. He reasons:

If you would be a compleat Mother, take Care of the Body of your little infant. . . As often as you hear your Child crying, think this with yourself, he calls for this from me. When you look upon your Breasts, those two little Fountains, turgid, and of their own accord streaming out a milky Juice, remember Nature puts you in Mind of your Duty: Or else, when your Infant shall begin to speak and with his pretty Stammering shall call you Mammy. How can you hear it without blushing? When you have refus’d to let him have it, and turn’d him off to a hireling Nipple, as if you had committed him to a Goat or a Sheep. When he is able to speak, what if instead of calling you Mother, he should call you Half-Mother? (58)

In addition to making mother’s feel guilty and neglectful, Erasmus claims that by not nursing an infant, the mother endangers the baby’s health and well being. He argues that “genius of Children are vitiated by the Nature of the Milk they suck. . . Do you think there is no foundation in Reason for this Saying, *He suck’ed in this ill Numour with the Nurses’s Milk?*” (58). There was a common belief among early modern society that infants took on the emotional characteristics of the person who nursed the child.

Finally, Erasmus claims that nursing is a mother’s duty. He challenges mothers to be obedient to their duties:

Do you think there is any one in the World will go through all the Fatigue of Nursing as the Mother herself; the Bewrayings, the Sitting up a Nights, the Crying, the Sickness, and the diligent Care in looking after it, which can scarece

be enough. If there can be one that loves like the Mother, then she will take Care like a Mother . . . You have not performed the Duty of a Mother before you have first formed the tender Body of your Son, and after that his Mind, equally soft, by a good Education. (58)

As a mother who bore eighteen children, Elizabeth Clinton, Countess of Lincoln, admitted with regret that she acted under bad counsel and the authority of others in giving her children to nurses. In one of the few early modern texts written by a woman, she attempts to explain the importance of breastfeeding. She warns others not to make the mistake that she made. She claims that two of her children died because of “dissembling nurses.” She writes:

Be not so unnatural as to thrust away your only children: be not so hardy as to venter a tender Babe to a lesser tender heart:. . . Think alwais, that having the child at your breast, and having it in your armes, you have Gods blessing there. For children are Gods blessing. Thinke againe how your Babe crying for your breast, sucking hartily the milke out of it, and growing by it, is the Lords owne instruction, every houre, and every day, that you are suckling it, instructing you to shew that you are his new borne Babes, by your earnest desire after his word. (19-20)

The “nursing mother” was a popular topic that both Swetnam and Leigh drew from. In the opening paragraphs, the dedication to women, Swetnam makes a bold but ultimately damaging claim. In his fury against women, he claims that he cares not whom he offends, even if it is his own mother. He spouts: “I am weaned from my mothers teat, and therefore neuer more to bee fed with her pap: wherefore say what you will, for I will

follow my own vein in unfolding every pleat, and shewing every wrinkle of a womans disposition” (1). In this explosion of anger, Swetnam identifies his mother as a nursing mother, one who did her duty to nurture her son. Swetnam appears particularly callous and implicates himself as guilty of being worse than “giddy-headed” young men.

Women’s breasts, he claims, are not fountains for “milky juice.” Instead he writes:

Betwixt their brests is the vale of destruction. . . .They are ungrateful, periured, full of fraud, flouting and deceit, unconstant, waspish, toyish, light, sullen, pround, discourteous and cruell. . . .She will give thee rostmeat, but she will beat thee with the spitte. . . [women] are like Eagles, which alwaises flie where the carrion is. . . They will play the horse-leach to suck away thy wealth, but in the winter of thy misery shee will flie away from thee. . leaving nothing but dirt hind he. (16)

Here Swetnam rejects the image of a nurturing woman whose breasts offer nourishment and the “fragrance of the mother” (Erasmus, *Seven dialogues* 58). The woman’s breasts conceal destruction, and instead of nursing the child with her own milk, according to Swetnam, the mother “sucks” the livelihood from her family and then deserts those who need her. Swetnam also claims that “[mother’s] brest will be the harbourver of an envious heart, and her heart the storehouse of poisoned hatred. . . Women are called the hooke of all evill, because men are taken by them, as fish is taken with the hooke.” (16)⁷²

Curiously, at the end of his pamphlet, Swetnam admits that mothers suffer in childbirth, but his admission further implicates him in his callous assessment of a nurturing mother. He concedes:

⁷² See John Donne’s “The Bait”.

Amongst all the creatures that God hath created, there is none more subject to misery then a woman, especially those that are fruitfull to beare children,, for they have feare a months rest in a whole yeare, but are continually overcome with paine, sorrow & feare, as indeed the danger of child-bearing must needs bee a great terror to women, which are counted but weake vessels, in respect to men, and yet it is supposed that there is no disease that a man indureth, that is one halfe so grievous or painful as child-bearing to a woman: Let it be the toothache, goute or collicke; nay if a man had all these at once, yet nothing comparable to a womans paine in her travell with child. (59)

Here he sympathizes with the pain of childbirth, but in the process he indicts himself. If he knows the pain of childbirth, how can he justify indicting women, including his own mother who nursed him? He anticipates condemnation, but in spite of admitting that his actions are foolish he publishes it anyway.

In contrast, Leigh uses the same nursing mother image to show how “carefull” she is. Leigh “turns” Swetnam’s image and channels it into a startling contrast. In the opening dedication to her sons, she describes herself as a “fearfull, faithfull, and carefull” mother. She tells her sons not to condemn her because she is doing something so unusual as publishing her writing. She says that she is offering them “spiritual manna” or “spiritual food for the soul” (6). She expands on the image of the nurturing mother who provides sustenance for her children because of her love for them and her duty to her husband. She asks, “Is it possible, that she, which hath carried her child within her, so neare her hart, and brought it forth into this world with so much bitter paine, so many grones, and cries, can forget it?” She answers:

Nay, rather she will she not labour now till Christ be formed in it? Will shee not blesse it every time it suckes on her brests, when shee feeleth the bloud come from her heart to nourish it? Will shee not instruct it in the youth, and admonish it in the age, and pray for it continually? Will shee not be afraid, that the child which shee endured such paine for, should endure endless paine in hell?"(11)

Then she asks,

“Will not a mother venter to offend for the world her childrens sake? Therefore let no man blame a mother, though she sometime exceede in writing to her children, since every man knows, that the love of a mother to her children, is hardly contained within the bounds of reason. Neither must you, my sonnes, when you come to be of judgement, blame me for writing to you, since Nature telleth me that I cannot long bee here to speake unto you. (13)

Leigh claims that a mother probably cannot forget her nursing child. But even if other mothers might forget, Leigh will not. She then “turns” the image to a biblical source. Leigh references Isaiah 49.15 in the Old Testament. Isaiah asks, “Can a mother forget the Child of her Wombe?” The scripture answers that it is nearly impossible for a mother to forget her nursing child. But even if it were possible for a mother to forget, *Christ* will not. He has his “children’s” images engraved on the palms of His hands, and their “walls” are continually before him. Everyone else may forget, but He will not.

Leigh cites from the Geneva Bible. The marginal notes that accompany these verses in the Geneva Bible make the text politically charged. The notes remind readers that *tyrants* (a term that James disliked) will ultimately be subdued. Kings will become “nursing fathers,” and queens “nursing mothers.” Before that time, however, there will

be confusion and chaos, and it may seem that God has forgotten his covenant people, but God will never forget. The marginal notations indicate that any labor that brings His children to salvation may seem to be in vain because it may appear that He has forgotten his chosen children. The marginal notes reassure the reader that God has not forgotten and that God is the ultimate ruler, not earthly kings. Isaiah 49 ends with, “I will save thy children, and will feede them that spoile them with their owne flesh, and they shal be drunken with their own blood, as with swete wine; & al flesh shal knowe that I the Lord am thy Saviour & thy redeemer, the mighte one of Jakob (*Geneva Bible*, Isaiah 49.25-26). Swetnam had claimed that woman feeds on the “carrion” flesh of her husband’s goods. Leigh presents a chapter from Isaiah with annotation that the wicked feed on one another. Leigh channels the “nursing mother” image to a biblical source that reminds readers of the love of God toward his children. God never forgets his children. This represents an instance of a *maternal authority statement*. Leigh gains credibility as a mother by drawing on powerful biblical images of mothers who represent the image of Christ.

God never forgets his children, but both Leigh and Swetnam claim to forget themselves. Both have moments of selective amnesia that directly affect the writers’ credibility with the audience. Swetnam claims that he momentarily forgot himself:

Indeed, when I first began to write this booke, my wits were gone a wool-gathering, in so much that in a maner of forgetting my selfe, and so in the rough of my fury, I vowed for ever to be an open enemy unto women; but when my fury was a little past, I began to consider the blasphemy of this infamous booke against

your sects; I then took my pen, and cut him in twenty peeces, and had it not been for hurting my self, I would have cut my own fingers which held my pen. (2)

Swetnam admits that his wits had abandoned him, but he went ahead with his writing anyway. Although he momentarily regretted it and realized it was probably not the wisest thing to do, he sent his publication out to be printed. By this, Swetnam appears selfish, careless, and callous.

Leigh also has a case of selective amnesia. She claims that she “forgot” herself as well, but she forgets herself (not her children) because of the excessive care that she has for her children. She explains, “Know therefore, that it was the motherly affection that I bare unto you all, which made me now (as it often hath done heretofore) forget my selfe in regard of you” (5). Early modern society excused mothers because of their overabundance of emotion. Many writers drew on a woman’s excessive emotion, as did the “godly” men who preached sermons and provided the “crystal glasse” through which to view women. They noted that a woman’s excessive emotion often caused her to go beyond the bounds of logic. (Phillippy, *Women, Death and Literature* 14; Heller, “The Legacy and Rhetorics” 616).

In an interesting way, Leigh’s forgetfulness reminds us who she is. By reminding us who she is *not*, she uses a maternal authority statement that reminds us who she is. She is a woman, a mother, and a widow. She is entitled and expected to have strong emotional attachments. Some critics have claimed that the female authors of mother’s legacies had to “erase” themselves in order to be “heard.” One critic calls for the “immanent extinction” of the female writer, claiming that “the only way to become a perfect early modern woman is to become a dead early modern woman” (Becker 205.).

They cite Leigh's amnesia as evidence of Leigh attempting to "erase" herself. I take the opposite view. In this case, I side with Heller, who has recently argued in favor of a non-erasure theory regarding mothers' legacies. Heller notes the physical and material importance of the dying mother ("The Legacy and Rhetorics" 618).⁷³ The mother's physical body, with the breasts that symbolize her nurturing care, is ever present, even after the death of the physical body. This was a powerful maternal authority image that drew on a mother's authority and established maternal ethos. As Mazzola has argued, "Mothers, even dead ones, were powerful images" (131). The authority comes, she claims, from the ambiguous origins of a mother's power. Naomi J. Miller claims that a mother's authority originated in the "irresistible force of maternal love" (170). She claims, "One might argue that mothers were the figures most empowered, and even expected to express passionate desire in the early modern period" (171). That maternal power extends beyond the domestic sphere into "society at large" (172). In *Londons Mourning Garment* (1603) William Muggins describes the "affective bond between mother and child" that was forged, according to early modern views, during gestation and nursing. In an elegiac poem, he describes a mother's grief at the death of her three children during an outbreak of the plague:

Ah my swett Babes, what woulde noe I have done?

⁷³ Although I agree with Heller that early modern women writers did not "erase" themselves, I take an opposite stance from her when she claims that Leigh presents herself as a "helpless woman. . . rather than a bold woman making the uncommon decision to publish" (618). Heller argues that by presenting herself as "dying," Leigh emphasizes her material body, augmenting the body's importance. Thus, Leigh does not "erase" herself. I agree with Heller that the material body is not erased, but I disagree with her interpretation that Leigh presents herself as a weak and helpless woman. Instead, I argue that Mother's living body, as well as her corpse, is a powerfully strong image. Early modern writers, male and female went through the traditional motions of justifying print due to various outward pressures, including being compelled by others. However, Leigh's presentation of herself is not as a helpless woman. It is quite to the contrary, as I hope this project illustrates. Also, Leigh's reasons for publication are unique, and they established the groundwork for her publication. I do not include being a "weak and helpless woman" as one of the reasons that Leigh publishes.

To yeelde you comfort, & maintaine you here
To feed your mouthes, though hunger pincht me neere;
All three at once, I woulde your bodies cheere.

Twaine in my lappe, should sucke their tender Mother,
And with my foot, I would have rockt the other.

(qtd. in Phillippy, *Women, Death, and Literature* 112)

The emphasis on the mother's physical body did more than simply remind readers of the mother's care for her children. It also provided a strong appeal to maternal ethos. Swetnam claimed to forget himself in an emotional outburst of anger, and Leigh claimed to forget herself in an act of care for her children and duty to her deceased husband. George Puttenham clarifies the link between forgetfulness and rhetoric (Sullivan 3). Leigh explains that one of her reasons for writing is so that her sons will not forget her teachings. She reminds them that "this my mind will continue long after mee in writing" (13). Puttenham claims that the most powerful form of argument in all "oratoric craft" is "to behold as it were in a glasse the lively image of our deare forefathers, their noble and virtuous manner of life, with other things authentike, which because we are not able otherwise to attaine, to the knowledge of, by any of our sences, we apprend them by memory" (qtd. in Sullivan 3). Leigh is not only a mother, but she is also a dying mother.

Stephen Greenblatt describes the authority of a dying writer's "voice." He describes the resurfacing of a translation of *De rerum naturea*, written by Lucretius who died in 55 BCE. When it was found by Poggio Bracciolini in 1417, Bracciolini describes it as "the thing itself, wearing borrowed garments, or even the author himself, wrapped in graveclothes and brought back from the dead" (421). The "dangerous poem once again

came to life” (422). Later Greenblatt picked up a translation of *De rerum natura* for ten cents on a shelf at the old Yale Co-op. He relates: “I had the feeling that a dead man was insistently and personally addressing me, trying to give me a message. So too with Montaigne’s *Essais*, with *Hamlet*. . . with Donne and Herrick and Marvell and dozens of other texts and writers all jumbled together unsystematically as my own personal ghosts.” (423). For Greenblatt, as for Heller, authors do not “erase themselves.” The writer appears before us, more present than ever with “faults and all,” not perfect, “just there” (Walcott, “Sea Grapes”).

Leigh’s images of the industrious bee, the nursing mother, and even cases of selective amnesia are powerful reminders of a mother’s authority. By comparison, Swetnam appears to be excessively emotional and garrulous, traits usually assigned to wives. Swetnam invested a good deal of energy into the problem of choosing a wife.

Choosing a Wife

According to Swetnam, a man cannot win when he chooses a wife: “The world is not made of Otemeale,; nor all is not golde that glisters, nor a smiling countenance is no certain testimonial of a merry heart. . . therefore [men should] cut off the occasion, which may any way bring [them] into fooles Paradise” (34). Because all women were filled with evil, there is no way to win in choosing a wife. In Swetnam’s mind, a man who spends his time and money on women “resembles the simple Indians, who apparel themselves most richly when they goe to be burned” (39). He cautions:

If thou aske me how thou shouldest choose thye wife? I answere that thou hast the whole world to make choyse, & yet thou maiest be deceived. An ancient father being asked by a young man how hee should choose a wife, he answered him

thus, When thou seest a flocke of maydens together, hudwinke thy selfe fast, and runne amongst them, and looke which thou chasest, let her be thy wife: the young man told him, that if he went blindfolded, he might be deceyued: and so thou maiest (quoth-the old man) if thy eyes were open; for in the choise of thy wife, thou must not trust thy owne eyes, for they will deceive thee, and be the cause of thy woe. (46)

Basically, a man loses either way.

Leigh places the responsibility for choosing a godly wife and for ensuring a successful marriage squarely on the shoulders of the husband. She offers guidelines for choosing a wife. She has two basic rules: seek a godly wife, and love her. She uses some of her strongest language in exhorting her sons to marry for love and never to change in those feelings. "Let nothing," she writes, "after you have made your choice, remove your love from her" (53). She claims that a man is "very foolish" to dislike his own choice, especially since God "hath given a man much choyse among the godly." She claims never to have seen such "senseles simplicity" as to "mislike" one's own choice, especially when a man has "almost a world of women to choose him a wife" (55).

Like Swetnam, she notes that the man has nearly the whole world from which to make his choice. Unlike Swetnam, she claims that she has never seen such "senseless stupidity" as to "mislike" one's own choice. She also presents four more guidelines to follow in choosing and living with the choice of a wife: First, marry someone godly. Second, marry someone you love. Third, do not be so stupid as not to like your own choice. Fourth, if you chose unwisely, use discretion to cover up your own stupidity. Fifth, if you have no discretion, you should have "policy." Policy meant using prudent

conduct or expedient behavior, even if you have made an unwise choice. Finally, if you lack all of these, you are unfit for any woman. She boldly declares, “If you get wives that be holy and you love them, you shall not need to forsake me,” but she warns, “If you have wives that you love not, I am sure I will forsake you.” She continues, “If shee be thy wife, she is always too good to be thy seruant, and worthy to bee thy fellow” (56).

If her biographical information is correct, Leigh’s sons would have been marriageable age at the time of her death. Like Brilliana Harley, she may not have lived to meet her daughters-in-law.⁷⁴ Her constant and sensible, even modern, advice added to her credibility. It is no wonder that early modern readers responded positively to her writing. Perhaps they were more modern than we give them credit. When we put Leigh next to Swetnam, we see a dimension that we miss if we focus only on the Swetnam/Speght dichotomy that permeates the anthologies.

Swetnam’s pamphlet offers anecdotes similar to what we might find in a stand-up comedian’s comic routine. It might be a recitation of the same “book of wikked wyves” that Jankyn reads in Chaucer’s *The Wife of Bath’s Prologue*⁷⁵ One of Swetnam’s respondents accuse him of “making a mingle-mangle gallimauphrie of [the refuse of idle headed Authores]. Lord! How you have cudgeld your braines in gleaning multitudes of similies as twere in the field of many writers, and thrash them together in the floure of your owne devisor: and all to make a poore confused misceline. (qtd. in Clarke 48). In contrast, Naomi Miller claims that Leigh’s advocacy of equality between the sexes is

⁷⁴ In Raymond Anselment’s article “Katherin Paston and Brilliana Harley: Maternal Letters and the Genre of Mother’s Advice,” Anselment notes how Harley continually follows the advice of conduct manuals, particularly Leigh’s *Mothers Blessing*, in advising her son Ned in a series of letters over five years. She dies before Ned is married (451). Harley provides an example of a strong and courageous woman who appears to be perpetuating on Leigh’s advice.

⁷⁵ See *The Wife of Bath’s Prologue*, line 685.

“perhaps the most constructive as well as courageous outcomes of the early modern debate over gender relations.” According to Miller, Leigh’s attitude is quite modern because it stresses the relationship of woman’s position as equal to the man (181).

Leigh’s attitude towards women is actually not novel at all. In *Christian Oeconomie* (1609), William Perkins claims that civil and ecclesiastical policy originated “within the precincts of private families,” and he describes the family as the “Seminarie of all other Societies.” Proper governing of the family provides “a direct meane” for directing the Church and Commonwealth. The husband’s duty was to love his wife as himself, to show his love in protecting her from danger and providing maintenance for her, and to give honor to the woman (Chapter 11). The wife’s role was to be subject to the husband and “yield obedience” to him (Chapter 12). Any image of an unruly wife reflected on the husband. However, Puritan marriage sermons emphasized the *partnership* between husband and wife. The 1549 *Book of Common Prayer* included a fully vernacular wedding service for the Church of England, created by Archbishop Cranmer. Marriage was “for the mutual society, help, and comfort that the one ought to have of the other” (qtd. in MacCulloch 651). Dudley Fenner describes the obligations that husbands and wives have to one another: “The wife hath not power over her own body but the husband.” However, he continues, “And likewise, the husband hath not power over his own body, but the wife.” Also, William Whately stressed that ultimately, “the husband should gauge his behavior on her conscience” (Whately 34).

This indicates that much of the literature surrounding the *querelle des femme* illustrates only one side of the issue. Strong evidence exists that both men and women often objected to much of the misogynistic rhetoric. Women responded in various ways.

For example, *Of Domestical Duties* (1622) was probably one of the most popular conduct books of the seventeenth century. The author, William Gouge, complained that his female auditors murmured and shifted in their seats in dissatisfaction at his sermons on women's domestic duties (Shami 166).

Leigh provides a stark contrast to Swetnam. She echoes many of the popular sermons and books of her day. Her text is a much more accurate representative text than Speght's *Mouzell* (meaning a muzzle). Speght is not a wife, nor a mother. She has not been married. She did not have the experience that Leigh had, so although Speght named Swetnam in her writing and came out swinging, just as he did. Speght is not as credible as someone who has had more life experience. Leigh's steady and logical argument increases her ethos. Also, the allusions she makes to the "Church Doctors" whose writing was being circulated as widely as her own would have been in their minds, and readers may have made some inter-textual connections. All in all, Leigh appears more educated and more trustworthy than Swetnam. She is especially eloquent when she debates the matter of original sin.

Original Sin

Swetnam claims that women were created from the crooked rib, and that means she was imperfect from the start, bent. She is responsible for all of man's misery. He tells women to go "downe, downe upon your knes, you earthly Serpents, and wash away your black sin with the cristall teares of true sorrow and repentance, so that when you wander from this inticing world, you may bee washed and cleansed from this foule leprosie of nature (29). According to Swetnam women were powerful because of their "beauty," but the power was destructive, similar to witchcraft. A woman's beauty had

not only vanquished kings and “Keisars,” but it had also:

surprised castles & countries, nay, what is it that a woman cannot do, which knows her power? Therefore stay not alone in the company of a woman, trusting to thy own chastity, except thou be more stronger then Sampson, more wife then Salomon, or mon holy then David; for these men and many more have been overcome by the sweet entisements of women. (22-23)

Swetnam asserts that all women since Eve have been crooked and perverse.

Leigh claims that Eve may have taken the apple, but the apple gave her knowledge, and with that knowledge, she recognizes Satan, and she defies him (162). She does not see herself as unique. She speaks to and for other women. She tells women to give men the first and chief place, but to labor to come in second and to show the world how quickly women put sin out of their lives (18). She argues that because women have renounced their appetites and passions, and subjected their will to their husbands, they are actually spiritually superior to men (L. Davis 65). If women, being weaker than men, can renounce their worldly passions, men have no excuse. She emphasizes:

For before, men might say, The woman beguiled me, and I did eate the poisoned fruit of disobedience, and I dye. But now man may say, if he say truly, The woman brought me a Saviour, and I feed of him by faith and live. Here is the great and wofull shame taken from women by God, working in a woman: man can claime no part in it: the shame is taken from us, and from our posterity for every: The seede of the woman hath taken downe the Serpents head. (36)

In strong, post-lapsarian vocabulary, Leigh engages Satan directly. Leigh may have not written prayers for her readers to recite, but she models the response that she suggests all

individuals use in an encounter with Satan. She tells Satan that he may have found Eve alone, but he will never find *her* alone. The Garden of Eden lies in the past. The “fortunate fall,” as Milton calls it, has given her knowledge. She recognizes Satan and tells him she will have nothing to do with him. Swetnam had advised that men should not stay alone in the company of women. Leigh “turns” the phrase, dropping any reference to gender. She advises that *no one* should be found alone in the company of Satan. When Satan offers baits, the individual should answer”:

I defie thee Sathan, and by Gods grace have knowledge. . . I can see thy policy, and how thou camest to our Parents, when they were alone; thou thoughtest they could not stand by themselves: but thou shalt never finde mee alone. . . I wouldst have thee know that I have knowledge. (163)

Leigh maintains that she will never be alone because she has knowledge. In contrast to the sermons that praised a good death because of the final struggle between the dying person and Satan, Leigh’s battle images do not occur around an individual’s deathbed, in the form of a final epic struggle with Satan at the end of mortality. Leigh’s battles take place daily and require daily preparation, even “manna,” or spiritual nourishment that is her constant company. Leigh describes battles that resemble the traditional deathbed struggles, but in Leigh’s account, the combatants remain very much alive. She resembles Michel de Montaigne in many ways. Although many of his writings as a younger man featured a preoccupation with death, as he matured his mind was “centered not on dying but on living” (Screech xii). His *essais* are very much about living.

Leigh claims that one of her reasons for writing is to “encourage women” to show how carefully and quickly women put sin out of their own lives and the lives of their

posterity. In these early chapters, she directly addresses women, instead of her sons (Chapters 5 and 9). She echoes the writing of another reportedly female-authored defense for women: *Jane Anger Her Protection for Women*. Jane Anger claims that "woman are more excellent than men." Men are made of "filthy clay" which God "purified" by transforming it into flesh so when He made woman from man's flesh, He used a more refined and purified substance, so logically woman is purer than man. This type of rhetoric became very common in the writings of early modern polemical and religious writings (Vecchi 679).

Swetnam uses examples of bad wives found in classical history, including Helen of Troy, Layes (wife of Menelaus), Theodora (wife of Socrates). Leigh uses no examples from classical literature. Her audience would know that Perkins instructed preachers to use biblical examples, rather than classical. Leigh continues by relating that it is almost incredible to believe, but many heathen women have been examples of chastity. She relates:

before they would be defiled, have been careless of their lives, and so have endured all those torments, that men would devise to inflict upon them, rather than they would lose the name of a modest mayd, or a chaste Matron. Yea and so farre they have been from consenting to any immodestie, that if at any time they have been ravished, they have either made away themselves, or at least have separated themselves from company, not thinking themselves worthy of any society, after they have once bin delowred, though against their wils. (38-39)

Also, Jon Dod (1614) claimed that "popish women, Jewes, and Turks," as well as some "professors of the Gospell" performed good and exemplary works. However, even

though the works may be virtuous, they should not get “praise and commendation” from men. Virtuous actions must be “perfumed,” as it were, in order to be acceptable to God. They must be performed with a “conscience towards God” (*Bathshebaes Instructions*72). The motivation is what made the difference in the action. A Christian would do it for the right reasons. These types of examples might come to mind of the early modern reader. There were plenty of examples of pagan wives who were virtuous women, even though they may not have had the proper motivation. Swetnam’s stock characters of bad pagan wives might have seemed out-of-date. Allusions to contemporary early modern texts added to Leigh’s *maternal authority*. Interestingly, Leigh does not offer the pagan examples. Instead, she alludes to “the fathers” who offer the examples.

Leigh claims that “some of the fathers” instructed that it is not enough for a woman simply to be chaste. She must avoid the very appearance of evil (Romans 1.16). John Dod is one of the fathers who made that claim.⁷⁶ Dod advised that it is not enough for women to “keepe themselves chaste, and untouched of vicious men, unlesse also they be of that integrity and uprightnesse, that they minister not so much as the least occasion of suspicion” (*Bathshebaes Instruction* 26). Women must be above reproach. Dod continues, however, by stressing that this instruction is not exclusively for women. In other words, women were supposed to remain above suspicion so that there was no grounds for a husband’s jealousy, but Dod emphasized that the same goes for the man:

⁷⁶ In several places, Leigh mentions “the fathers” or “doctors of the church.” Some sources claim that Leigh is making those references to others as a smokescreen, but she really comes up with the material on her own. I disagree with those scholars, and I have found evidence in this case, of one “father” who said exactly what Leigh claimed he said. I think if we look through sermons, particularly those of Dod and Perkins, we will find the examples she references. One reference in particular is to an acronym for MARIA. She claims that “some godly and reverend men” have come up with names of exemplary women to match each letter of the name MARIA (Leigh 42). She lists the women and discusses them. I have every confidence that the “reverend and godly” did indeed provide the acronym. Acronyms were popular. Even Speght made Joseph Swetnam’s name into an acronym and used each letter of his name to criticize him (Proem *Mouzell*)

“And this by a little turning of the words, may be drawne to the duty of the man towards his wife” (*Bathshebaes Instructions* 27). It was not exclusively a woman’s duty to remain above reproach. The same standard applied to men. Individuals should be able to “turn” the phrases and see how the content applies to men as well as to women.

Swetnam compares all women since Eve to eagles. However, he reminds readers, “Eagles eat not men till they are dead, but women devour them alive” (qtd. in Miller 166). Clearly, Swetnam is not the only author or the first writer to make such a comment. However, based on the closeness in time in which they both wrote, the popularity of Swetnam’s text, and the parallel arguments, Leigh could be responding to him. Swetnam claims:

Women are called night Crows for that in the night they will make request for such toys as cometh in their heads in the day, for women know their time to work their craft. For in the night, they will work a man like wax and draw him as the adamant doth the Iron. . . A man must take all the pains, and women will spend all the gains (qtd. in Miller 166-7).

Leigh assumes the persona of *all* women, not only mothers: “But wee women may now say, that men lye in waite every where to deceive us.” She uses Judas as an example of a man who betrays his master with a kiss. Even so men betray their mistresses “with a kisse & repent it not: but laugh and rejoyce, that they have brought sinne and shame to her that trusted them.” She turns the tables on Swetnam. She claims that even though Eve brought sin into the world, Mary took the “wofull shame” away. Indeed God “working in a woman” brought salvation to women *and to all of their “posterity,”* including man, and “*man* can claime no part in it” (emphasis added Chapter 9). She also

identifies who is really misbehaving at night. She claims that men “in the night” when they should be meditating on the Laws of God are “thinking of some earthy thing or other, either of this bargain or that purchase” (Chapter 43).

Widows

Swetnam is vicious when it comes to widows. He warns against marrying a widow. The man will have to “unlearn,” and that cannot be done. He also claims that widows cannot forebear a “carnal act.” Two men at once could not satisfy one widow. Swetnam advises readers not to take a widow for a wife, “for thou must unlearn a widow and make her forget and forgo her former corrupt and disordered behavior, the witch is hardly to be done” (21).

He warns, “Woe be unto that unfortunate man that matcheth himself unto a widow; for a widow will be the cause of a thousand woes” (60). He advises that men may be tempted to marry a wealthy widow, but they must consider the cost along with the gains. After all, if she is rich, she will want to govern the man. He says, “Commonly widows are so forward, so waspish, and so stubborn, that thou canst not wrest them from their wills.” Swetnam also claims that if a man marries a rich widow, he can’t win. If he acts happy, she will accuse him of being happy because of her money. If he acts sad, she will say he is sad because he wants to bury her. (61). Another man took his new widow to sea, and a great storm blew up. The master of the ship said to throw the heaviest items overboard. The man threw his widow overboard. When the master asked him why, he said that “in all his life, he had never felt anything as heavy as she had been.” And finally, one man married a widow who one day went into the garden and saw the man’s shirt hanging next to the maid’s shirt. In a fit of jealousy, the widow hung herself. When

his friends asked why she hanged herself, the husband said he wished that all tress bore such fruit. In short, Swetnam claims that “widows are the sum of the seven deadly sins, the fiends of Satan, the gates of Hell.”

He makes a costly mistake, however, by referring negatively to Judith. Leigh takes that image and uses it to her benefit. Swetnam claims that if Holofernes had not been seduced by Judith’s comely ankle, he would not have lost his head. That was a misstep on Swetnam’s part. Judith was the symbol of the ideal widow (*Mondodia* 333 n12). Judith inspired Israel’s tropes by sneaking into Holofernes tent and cutting off his head. She returned with the head to the armies of Israel, who were on the verge of a cowardly retreat. She inspired them by her courage. Israel went on to win the battle.

When the husband died, widows usually attended to their husbands, so they would know the necessity of preparing for their own death, including things like money and distribution of goods. A widow sometimes functioned as the executrix of her husband’s will and was involved in a very practical way following the immediate crisis of the deathbed. A widow would therefore be well aware of the need to behave responsibly and appropriately when the time came for her own demise. She may have time and motivation to prepare (a necessary feature of dying well), and she was often concerned that her assets were disposed of in keeping with her (and usually her late husband’s) wishes. (Becker 34).

Leigh *is* a widow. Unlike the widows Swetnam describes, she is dutiful to her husband until her dying breath (literally). She is willing to suffer the censure of the world in order to follow his instructions because God had taken her children’s father “out of this vale of tears. Leigh’s “obedience” would have been exactly what early modern

society would have expected from a virtuous mother, wife, and widow.⁷⁷ Without calling attention to herself, Leigh offers herself as an example. She puts her example into the public forum by publishing her conduct manual. She is clearly not the rich, lusty widow scanning the horizon for a young husband, like Chaucer's *Wife of Bath*, but she also not the lusty young widow who cannot live without a husband. She provides an example to contrast with Swetnam's. As a widow, she knew that when she was gone, there was no one to teach her sons. That is one of the main reasons that she took the unusual step to publish. She wanted her words to continue on after she was gone.

This chapter has illustrated how effectively Leigh engages Swetnam. Her calm logic contrasts sharply with his emotional outbursts. In response to Swetnam, Leigh seems to exclaim, "O judgment, thou art fled to brutish beasts, / And men have lost their reason" (*Julius Caesar* 3.2.109). A comparison of their writing shows that Leigh possesses the traits that are traditionally viewed as masculine—logic and reason, and Swetnam possesses the trait that is traditionally viewed as feminine—excessive and uncontrollable emotion. Swetnam and Leigh share themes that provide Leigh with abundant opportunities for "turning" phrases back onto Swetnam, changing Swetnam's themes from secular and gendered emphasis to Leigh's ungendered and godly emphasis. Leigh consistently uses scriptural authority to back her claims, which makes her appear wise and intelligent. Also, Leigh's genre choice keeps her out of the mire, out of the mud-slinging tendencies of the pamphlet genre. Leigh chooses the conduct manual as the

⁷⁷ Lady Anne Hobby would be an example of a widow who performed her duty to her husband after he died, and she was praised for it. She was also highly criticized as "monstrous" later, and the legends that surround her legacy includes ghost stories partly due, critics claim, because of her inversion of the patriarchal order. Her attempts to create a legacy are now "beer tinged folklore." (Phillippy 183). Her example makes Leigh even more compelling. No one criticizes Leigh for anything except for being too obedient or too religious.

vehicle to send up her arguments. She shows wisdom by not mentioning Swetnam by name while at the same time offering plenty of evidence to indict Swetnam in her condemnations.

In “‘A Mouzell for Malastomus’ in Context: Rereading the Swetnam-Speght Debate,” Christine Luckyj adds a final twist that I would like to apply to my discussion of the Swetnam controversy. She proposes that in *The Araignment* Swetnam is *not* attacking women. Instead, she proposes that Swetnam is attacking the king and his corrupt court. She points out that Swetnam’s descriptions of lewd and froward women describe Frances Carr, of the Overbury scandal. If that is true—and Luckyj makes a convincing argument—then those early modern authors who respond directly to Swetnam have been duped into a fight that is not real. By focusing on issues rather than attacking the author, Leigh skirts a contentious engagement with Swetnam. She has carefully constructed maternal ethos throughout her entire book, and her ethos remains intact. She has not muddied her reputation by coupling her name with Swetnam’s in pamphlet warfare. If Swetnam is indeed criticizing James, then Leigh and Swetnam are *still* in one another’s company, this time on the same side, for Leigh clearly criticizes James’s court and its seamy practices.

CHAPTER 5

ALL IN THE FAMILY: THE WRITINGS OF JAMES I AND DOROTHY LEIGH

God is our Father, our Maker, and governour, and our feeder. . . Now the father and governour knoweth what is fit for the childe, better than the childe. . . Therefore let him be content with that which his governour will give him (Leigh 107)

In the early 1600s, the ultimate guide for parents appeared on the shelves of London bookstores. The publication combined two popular conduct manuals: *The Mothers Blessing* and *The Fathers Blessing* in at least three editions.⁷⁸ It must have seemed like an ideal marriage of texts, especially for an early modern reading audience that reveled in its conduct manuals like no other century had (Ustic 409). However, *The Mothers Blessing* and *The Fathers Blessing* make a rather odd couple, shackled together in a strange sort of print matrimony. *The Mothers Blessing* was the best selling conduct manual written by Dorothy Leigh; *The Fathers Blessing* was the anonymously written adaptation of *Basilikon Doron*, another “runaway best-seller,” written by His Majesty, the King of England, Scotland, and Ireland: King James VI and I (Wormald 51).

In Chapter 4, I discussed how Dorothy Leigh engages social issues such as the role of women. In this chapter, I discuss how Leigh engages political discourse. The comparison text that I refer to is King James’s *Basilikon Doron*. To accomplish my goal, I explain the context of the publications. Then I summarize and evaluate *Basilikon Doron*, paying particular attention to the construction of ethos in the proem sections of both Leigh’s and James’s writings. From there, I move to a discussion of points of engagement between Leigh’s writing and James’s writing, noting areas where Leigh criticizes and warns the king and the commonwealth in general. I end by suggesting that

⁷⁸ See Gray, note 4, page 205

although Leigh definitely engages and criticizes James's writing, John Dod's *Bathsheba's Instructions to her son* is a much more likely source text for *The Mothers Blessing* than was *Basilikon Doron*.

Rationale for Choosing *Basilikon Doron*

Writing advice for children was not new. It has a long tradition. The seventeenth century revealed in its conduct books. Cicero's advice to his son, *De Officiis*, was circulating widely (410), as were other types conduct books, such as Baldesar Castiglion's *The Book of the Courtier* and Nicolo Machiavelli's *The Prince*. The same time period saw the publication of such conduct manuals as the *English Gentlewoman*, and the *English Gentleman*, both by Richard Brathwait;⁷⁹ *Of Domestical Duties*, by William Gouge; *The Mothers Blessing* by Nicholas Breton; *A Looking Glass for Married Folkes* by Robert Snawsel; and many more. Although offering advice was not new, the way the advice appeared *was* new.

In the aftermath of the Protestant Reformation a barrage of literature about the family appeared in the print market (MacCulloch 647). The Reformation and humanism contributed to new ideas about family relationships. The sixteenth century witnessed the marriages of Martin Luther and other prominent members of the clergy. Many of the wives in these marriages were educated former nuns, and the Protestant emphasis on marriage rather than celibacy brought the family to the top of the list of seventeenth century concerns. Roles needed to be defined, and the family took on new importance. William Perkins's *Oeconomics* is one of the first English conduct manuals to attempt to map out a set of guidelines for family members. The family was considered a microcosm

⁷⁹ Brathwait's *The English Gentleman* and *The English Gentlewoman* were bound together in at least two editions: 1641 and 1644.

for the government, and the combination of family and government rhetoric created a particular phenomenon in the early seventeenth century.

Merging family and government rhetoric gave birth to a new way to interpret family relationships. For example, if William Perkins (and others) could claim that the family is the basic unit and the “seminarie” for society, then the family became the model or “glasse” that governments imitate.⁸⁰ Erasmus explains that good families produce good children. Good children become good citizens, and good citizens create a healthy commonwealth (*Of Education*). The same language that described the king’s relationship to his subjects described the father’s relationship to his family, and the lines between the private sphere and the public sphere were blurred. Although using familial language to describe political relationships was not entirely unusual, such language became more significant because the discussion necessarily brought about questions of where the authority originated and how it could be controlled. In the early years of the seventeenth century, writers wore themselves out debating issues of authority (McIlwain xx). Thus, the conduct manual found its place.

Catharine Gray has identified two conduct manuals as source texts for Leigh’s *Mothers Blessing*: Nicholas Breton’s *Mothers Blessing* and James’s *Basilikon Doron* (*Women Writers* 45). Breton’s book has almost nothing in common with Leigh’s,⁸¹ and

⁸⁰ William Perkins defines the family as the “model” for the “common-wealth.” However, when Gouge takes up the discussion, Gouge reverses the order, as do other writers. Gouge and others claim that the commonwealth is a model for the family to follow. As far as James was concerned, he was divinely appointed, and no one except God could remove him or correct him. If the issue here is authority, Gouge’s reversal of words is important. Habermas discusses this in depth. He singles out England as unique from the continental provinces and their evolving bourgeois. Habermas notes that in early modern England, the heart of the issue is the *source* of authority, not the *distribution* of power. If, based on Perkins, the wife has the duty or obligation to disobey a tyrant husband, then that could reflect a similar situation of potential conflict between the monarch and his or her subjects. Understanding these complex relationships becomes critical to understanding the rhetoric of the seventeenth century.

⁸¹ Gray claims that Breton’s use of a first-person maternal narrator paved the way for Leigh to use her own

although I agree with Gray that *Basilikon Doron* discusses similar topics, I question whether it is a logical source text for Leigh's *The Mothers Blessing*.

Basilikon Doron was initially well received. It went through eight editions in about two months. According to Jenny Wormald, it was "a runaway best seller." However, Wormald also notes that even though it was a "guide to their new king," it was a project that "went very badly awry," partly because James was "a deligher in controversy. . . even bad tempered controversy." Wormald observes that the English took him too literally and "failed to make allowance for bursts of irritation and visible exaggeration in the heat of argument" (52). After the first two and a half months, there was no market for *Basilikon Doron*. After the initial 1603 edition, it was re published once more in 1616 by James Montagu along with a collection of James's other writing in a commemorative edition (52). Unlike other early modern best sellers that were literally read to pieces, *Basilikon Doron* may have been bought, "perhaps read once, and put on the bookshelf." similar to a "coronation mug" (51).

James Doleman, however, has suggested another way to interpret the English reception of *Basilikon Doron*. He maintains that it was presented back to the king in a variety of ways and that people quoted from it for nearly one hundred years, often using it for their own political ends ("A King" 2). Allusions to it were "without exception complimentary" and "James's book [was] treated like holy writ, and quoted as an unassailable authority" (2). Doleman notes that people saw in it what they wanted to see and probably what they hoped was the "trew" mind of their new king. Both John Donne and James's editor James Montagu warned James not to publish his writing. They believed that he was opening himself up as a public target. Montague reminded him that

maternal voice.

he had “vouchsafed to descend to a conversation with [his] Subjects by way of [his] book” (qtd. in Doleman, “A King” 9, n41). James had sought the middle ground, but in the process he had opened himself up to criticism from both sides. In a way, he exemplified Frances Bacon’s argument that “rhetoric is not the enemy, but ambiguity” (738).

Unlike Swetnam’s text, which provided a direct attack on women, James’s writing is ambiguous at times. However, it provides a logical comparison text to Dorothy Leigh’s *Mothers Blessing* because of its author and title. By that, I mean that James was a public figure, and yet he wrote a private conduct manual for his son. *Basilikon Doron* (or *The Royal Gift*) is unusual because of its author. The writings of James I are unique because of the point of view from which he wrote. The main subject of all of his writing is authority, and James was “uniquely placed to write on that subject” (Sommerville, Introduction xxviii). Leigh is a mother who has authority in her domestic sphere. Placing a public father-figure (king) next to a private mother-figure provides a unique mixture of familial dynamics and its respective authority. The seventeenth century wore itself out discussing authority, and James was a primary contributor to the written debates.

In addition, James and Leigh share several topics. Although they offer similar advice, by 1616 James had left a trail of public decisions and actions that contradicted his written words. Wormald claims that James never acted on his threats regarding absolute authority. However, because he does not follow through with his claims (as he stressed in *Basilikon Doron*), James constructs “ignoble” ethos. His audience does not trust him. The anonymously published *Fathers Blessing* does nothing to help James establish credibility with his audience. It does, however, establish a relationship between Leigh

and James. Placing Leigh and James next to one another gives an opportunity to theorize about how Leigh constructs maternal ethos in the wake of paternal decisions that James had left behind. We can theorize how Leigh sees herself, her society, and her role in her society. We also see how she criticizes and warns society.

Summary of *The Fathers Blessing* and *Basilikon Doron*

The Fathers Blessing is an odd book in many ways. The official title is *The fathers blessing; or Second Councell to his sonne, Appropriated to the generall, from that particular example of learning and pietie, his Majesty composed for the prince his sonne. Secoded with observations upon the Directions and Precepts of the Sages and Philosophers of ancient and Moderene times. With prayers and Graces fitted to their years and Capacities*. It is an anonymously written adaptation of James's *Basilikon Doron*. *The Father's Blessing* and Dorothy Leigh's *The Mothers Blessing* were bound together in three separate editions in the early 1600s.⁸²

The anonymously written preface to *The Fathers Blessing* claims that it is better not to be born than not to be instructed in wisdom. The book warns the reader that death is coming at some unknown time, so the person should be prepared. It includes a quote from "the learned Sir Thomas More." More advised, "Knowest thou a moneth should end thy daies, / It would give cause for sorrow. / And yet perhaps thou laughs today / When thou must die tomorrow" (9). It also warns against subordination: "Yet invert not the cause of Nature by juding your superiors, for it is observable (as his Majestie well noted) that the parents blessing or curse hath almost ever a prophesying power enjoined with it (9). The book is a strange mixture of advice, on the one hand commending Sir Thomas

⁸² Leigh's 1622, 1623, and 1624 editions were found bound with James's 1621, 1624, and 1624 editions, respectively. See Gray's *Women Writers* note 4 on page 204-205

More (a Catholic saint executed by Henry VIII) and on the other hand reminding the reader not to subvert the divine order of society and go against the king (which More did). The main text is a hodgepodge of commonplace sayings.

In Chapter 1, I presented examples of commonplace books that were filled with reflection, personal commentary, and evidence of study and reading practices. *The Fathers Blessing* has none of those things. One commonplace saying about commonplace books ran, “Tho his head be empty, his commonplace book is full” (Havens 54). That seems to be the case with *The Fathers Blessing*. The advice is so general that it becomes cliché. For example, “Let not the Sonne goe down upon thy wrath, nor close up malice with thine eyes, for otherwaies how canst thou require mercie at the hand of God” (15), and “Believe not all that is told, nor tell not all that thou hearest” (18). There is no apparent order, just a hodgepodge of advice, similar to the advice Polonius gives to Laertes in *Hamlet* before Laertes goes off to France.

After thirty-seven pages of fatherly counsel, the book concludes with approximately ten pages of prayers and meditations. The prayers include a Morning Prayer, an Evening Prayer, St. Augustine’s Prayer, and St. Barnard’s Prayer. The last pages also contain several epitaphs that remind the reader of approaching death, for example: “As you are, so was I / As I did so shall you dye” (50). It appears to follow the *ars moriendi* or *The Art of Dying* tradition. Ultimately, *The Fathers Blessing* ends as it began, with a reminder that death comes to everyone.

Although written “prayers” are not unusual for some Protestant conduct manuals, *The Fathers Blessing* contains several prayers written by Catholic saints. It shares almost nothing with *The Mothers Blessing* except the most common of themes, and we can only

guess how the reading audience viewed the paired books. The act of binding *The Fathers Blessing* and *The Mothers Blessing* signifies that publishers and probably audiences were linking the husband of the “whole isle” of Britain with the mother of George, John, and William Leigh. And either way we look at it, they make an odd couple.

The source text of *The Fathers Blessing* is *Basilikon Doron*. *Basilikon Doron* is a conduct book filled with practical advice dedicated “to Henry my dearest sonne, and natural successour.” In 1599, while James was James VI of Scotland, he privately published seven copies of *Basilikon Doron* (Sommerville, Introduction xix). It is divided into three parts that explain a king’s Christian duty towards God, his duty in his office, and his behavior in “Indifferent things.” It is not long, nor is it weighted with political theory. Rather, it builds on the political theory that James penned in his other book, *The Trew Law of free monarchies*, which is an “unequivocal defense of the divine right of kings” (Wormald 46). *Basilikon Doron* was a book, like the Bible, that could be, and certainly was, interpreted in various ways.

The first section includes encouragement to read the scriptures, but also a warning not to interpret them as many people do “making it like a bell to sound as you please” (13). He reminded Henry that the Bible, especially the writings of Solomon, is “so full of golden sentences, and morall precepts. . [a] rich storehouse of precepts of natural wisdom” (15). He also tells Henry that he will find “a myrrour” of himself as either a good king or a bad king in “the books of *Kings* and *Chronicles*.” James often referred to himself as Solomon, and Solomon became “one of James’s favourite scriptural characters, after whome he conscientiously fashioned himself” (Stewart 52). The second book instructs Henry that he has two jobs: to establish and execute good laws and to be

an example by his good behavior. James stresses, “Keep precisely your promises unto them, although to your hurt” (32), and “marry a godly and virtuous wife, and one of your religion” because a king’s behavior is a “lampe” to everyone else (42). The third book tells Henry that the king is “as one set on a stage, whose smallest actions and gestures, all the people gazingly doe behold” (49). He claims that exercise is good, including dancing, fencing, leaping, archerie, wrestling, hunting, and hawking—everything except football. “Footeball” is too rough. If Henry gets tired of reading, he should “go out and play” (56-57).

The initial seven copies came into the hands of some Scottish Presbyterians who criticized some of the content. In response, James wrote a *proem* or *exordium* for the book and had it published. Arriving in London in 1603 shortly before James got there, *Basilikon Doron* served as England’s introduction to its new king. The English people were anxious to get a glimpse of their new king; however, the angry preface that James added to the 1603 edition did not help England warm up to him.

Doleman pays particular attention to the preface of the 1603 and 1616 editions of *Basilikon Doron*. Wormald also notes that the English could have learned important information about their future king if they had paid attention to the preface. The prologue or “proem” is approximately nine pages long. In *Ethics*, Aristotle claims that ethos is constructed particularly in the *proem* or *exordium* (*King James I* 260). I am particularly interested in looking at the proem as a foundation for ethos. Wormald claims that the English sadly misunderstood their king (52). McIlwain claims that James sadly misunderstood the English (lv). Either way, there is evidence of “ignoble” ethos in *Basilikon Doron*, and it begins in the proem. In contrast to James, Leigh takes advantage

of the opportunity to begin establishing credibility through maternal ethos strategies in her proem.

Proem Analysis

Proems are often overlooked. By definition the *proem* or *exordium* is the introductory material, which may consist of dedications, addresses to the audience, or other introductory material. According to Thomas Wilson's *Arte of Rhetorique* (1551), the proem should give the audience the overall point of the work. In that sense, according to Wilson, the proem could be considered as an expression of the work's thesis. When we look at it that way, its importance becomes clear. Proems also serve as places where writers sometimes go to "fix" problems stemming from misinterpretations or misunderstandings. Gray notes examples of writers who revised their publications because they were seen as seditious or heretical. For example, Nicholas Breton withdrew his dedication to Thomas Roe from the 1602 version of his *Mothers Blessing*. Apparently, Roe supported the Bohemian cause, and Roe had become too dangerous a figure to head the 1621 edition (60-61).

Also, in 1551, Thomas Wilson was arrested and tortured by the Roman Inquisition on grounds that his logic and rhetoric books were heretical. After he escaped from prison, he added a "Prologue to the reader" to the 1560 edition of *The Arte of Rhetorique*. He claimed to "washe" his hands of any harm that should come to those who read his book. The proem identifies Wilson as a Protestant martyr. Proems can also function as a foundation for future rhetoric and as a place to establish a bond with the audience. A smart writer will take advantage of the proem and use it to her benefit as Leigh did in *The Mothers Blessing*.

Both James and Leigh have significant proems. Like other conduct manuals, they address their readers. James's does not appeal to a patron or protector. He is, after all, the king. Instead, he addresses two sets of readers. He addresses Henry "My Dearest Sonne and Natural Successor," and then because copies of the initial seven published copies fell into the hands of critics who attacked his writing, James addresses another audience: "the reader." James has, then, two addresses. Leigh, on the other hand, follows the traditional pattern of addressing first her patron and Protector Elizabeth. Of note is the fact that James addresses his son Henry, and Dorothy addresses James's daughter Elizabeth. The Leigh addresses her sons: "To my beloved sonnes, George, John, and William Leigh, all things pertaining to life and godliness."

Leigh does not outwardly address a public audience, although she clearly states that she is deviating from "the usual order of women" (16) by writing a book that would "shew [her] imperfections to the view of the World." Because proems are important to the foundations of ethos, I would like to contrast the proems of both *The Mothers Blessing* and *Bailikon Doron* to see successful and unsuccessful construction of ethos. To do that, I will look at the components of ethos: virtue, wisdom, and goodwill.

Both proems seek to show *virtue*. As Craig Smith points out, virtue comes by making careful and deliberate choices (6). In the proem, James tells Henry that as his father, James must be "carefull" for Henry's "godly and vertuous" education. Because James will be absent due to his affairs or he might be separated by death, the book will serve as a "counsellor" and also as a "testament" of his will. He tells Henry that the book will "conferr" with him when Henry is quiet. So far, the proem seems appropriate, the

words of a "carefull" father. However, in the address to the "reader," James acknowledges that his "private" conversation has become "publick," which happens because kings are always on a public stage in the sight of all the people: "for Kings being publike persons, by reason of their office and authority, are as it were set (as it was said of old) upon a publike stage, in the sight of all the people;" (4). He writes that "children of envie" are like wasps that "suck venome out of every wholesome herbe," and now he is forced to write a preface to clear up the misunderstood portions because of the "shortness" of his style (4).

Smith points out that a rhetor shows virtue by making deliberately good choices. James is at a disadvantage because in 1603, he has made no choices that affect his newly acquired English subjects. However, by the time the 1616 edition was published (the year that Leigh published), James had made several unpopular choices that appeared to contradict the counsel he offered in *Basilikon Doron*. The proem provided the initial introduction to the character of their new monarch. James was correct when he noted in the proem, "I know the greatest part of the people of this whole Isle, have beene very curious for a sight thereof. . . have longed to see any thing, that proceeded from that authour whom they so loved and honoured; since bookes are very Ideas of the authours mind" (9). Yes, they were curious—and concerned.

James tried to reassure his audience that he was Protestant and that he would not seek revenge for the execution of his mother, Mary Queen of Scots.⁸³ However, in 1603, the readers have only his word, and by 1616, the questions had changed to reflect their concern about James's hesitancy to get involved in the religious wars on the

⁸³ In a letter to Queen Elizabeth King James indicated that he would be foolish to sacrifice the crown for his feelings for his mother. In a letter to Leicester, James wrote, "How fond and inconstant I were if I should prefer my mother to the title (qtd. in Orlin 97).

continent. They viewed him as "a strange father who will not come to aid of his children or pray for them" (Gray, *Women Writers* 61) and "sorry protector" for the Protestant faith (McIlwain lxxx). Decisions about the Overbury scandal further tarnished his reputation. His court was associated with excess and scandal that directly contradicted the claims he made in *Basilikon Doron*. Tita French Baumlin notes that for all of its talk of Cicero, notions of ethos come from Machiavelli. The Prince who would say one thing and do something else horrified early modern readers (236). By 1616, early modern readers may have seen traces of Machiavelli's Prince in James. I discuss some of the specific contradictions later in this section. For now, my point is that readers in 1616 have access to a history of decisions made by James that could tarnish his *virtue*.

By contrast, Leigh carefully constructs an image of maternal virtue. She presents herself in the proem as a "carefull" mother. She is careful in her duty. She is careful of the dangers her children might face. She is careful in praying and reading, careful in putting sin out of her life. Her careful maintenance of their spiritual souls is most important to her. It is her motivation for writing. She clarifies that in the proem. Leigh describes other careful parents who care for the bodies but not the souls of their children (3). She notes that parents hazard their own health and welfare because of their caring for their children. The "Counsell to my Children," parable of the labourious bee illustrates her careful concern. She is the bee preparing for the blasts of winter. She has carefully gathered spiritual "manna" throughout her life, and her writing serves as "manna" for them and for others.

Richard Brathwait gives a definition of a "careful" woman in *The English Gentlewoman*. He complains that women are more concerned about their beauty than

about being good mothers. Mothers who educate their children "which they had brought up from their own breasts, with the milk of morality" are like Sulpitia, the wife of Calenus. She "left sundry memorable instructions, as *legacies* or *Mothers Blessings* to them, when she died." These, he claims, were "carefull Mothers, revernd Matrons" (110). Leigh's book was being published in at least one edition per year for around ten years before Brathwait published the *English Gentlewoman*. By referring to "Mothers Blessings," he may have called to mind Leigh's popular conduct manual for the reading audience. Leigh fits Brathwait's definition of the "Carefull" mother who leaves "memorable instructions."

Leigh appears to share the values of her audience, something that Aristotle claims is critical for credibility. She acts with decorum according to the values of her society. Some critics claim that Leigh had to die, or to erase herself (Becker 2). I disagree. Leigh had to establish herself, her living self, in order to create maternal ethos. It is true that her death removed any potential damage that future actions might cause. In a sense her death sealed her ethos, but I argue that her actions would have been judged as appropriate even if she had been alive. Death augmented the ethos, but her writing presents a history of careful and deliberate decisions that builds a foundation for ethos. Smith further explains that words and style create the ethos. I offer several examples of specific passages later in this chapter. Words and Leigh's style of delivery were the means to build credibility and to show wisdom.

Both proems seek to show *wisdom*. In order to establish wisdom, a rhetor has to connect to the audience. The audience already has its own values and morals. Morals are not necessarily always the same. Instead they are "moving targets," and the successful

rhetor must share the same target as the audience (Smith 7). It is here that James suffers, and it begins in the proem. James published only seven copies, and he sought to take the "middle road" in his writing, but this opened him to interpretation and ambiguity. In the proem, James responds angrily that readers have misunderstood him. However, the rhetor has the responsibility to identify the moral compass of *the audience* and act accordingly in order to appear to have wisdom. James probably had good intentions, and he was a scholar. He often referred to himself as "Solomon." However by 1616, he had also acquired the title of "The wisest fool in Christendom" (qtd.in Lee xi).⁸⁴ James's shortcomings were mostly those of style rather than substance (Lee 309). The point here is that the problem with trust begins with James's angry outburst in the proem.

In contrast, Leigh shows wisdom by appealing to shared community values. Wisdom, like *virtue*, appears through a history of consistent deliberate choices. Leigh publishes at the end of her life. Based on her writing, we see a mother who has spent her life and energy trying to steer her children away from danger and back to God. It appears her audience shared similar goals. This helped her, especially as a writer from the margins, to create common ground with her audience. In *Man Cannot Speak for Her*, Carolin Kohrs Campbell explains that "the potential for persuasion exists in the shared symbolic and socioeconomic experiences of the persuader (rhetors) and the audiences; specific rhetorical acts attempt to exploit that shared experience and channel it in certain directions (2).

The proem explains that in spite of all censure she may receive for doing something so unusual as publishing her writing, she is willing to take that chance if it will benefit one of her sons, or anyone else. She is not merely being blindly obedient.

⁸⁴ The phrase was coined by Sir Anthony Weldon. See Maurice Lee *Great Britain's Solomon* page xi

Instead, she is doing what needs to be done in her particular case. This shows wisdom, namely applying the knowledge that she has. Women were supposed to be excused for excessive emotion because of the fierce love they had for their children. But excessive emotion can also damage credibility. Leigh wisely avoids showing an overabundance of motherly emotion. Instead, she remains rational and calm, merely pointing to her careful concern, an example of *maternal motivation*. Unlike James's proem, her proem is free from emotional outbursts. In this way, I think she gains credibility with the audience by showing wisdom.

Wisdom plays a major role in the poem that concludes the formal portion of Leigh's proem. The "Counsell to my Children" bee parable hovers over the entire *Mothers Blessing*. This is not a conduct manual about death, or even a dying parent legacy, as far as I can tell. The parable is rich with images of action and industry, of gathering and remembering. The parable of the bee is ultimately an adaptation of Proverbs Chapter 31, which describes a virtuous woman who prepares herself and her household for storms, tempests, and even death. Her actions reflect the values of her audience. Her actions reflect maternal domestic sphere statements that build trust with her audience because they share her values. She calls attention to her domestic sphere by discussing ways she can prepare her home against the blasts of winter, but she also calls attention to the "woman of strength" who inhabits that specific domestic sphere (Proverbs.31).⁸⁵

By asking the reader to pardon her for each "misplaced word," Leigh calls attention to *places* where words—the "manna" of life—are stored. The word

⁸⁵ Proverbs 31.10 states, "Who shall finde a women of strength, for her price is farre above the Carbuncles, or Rubies."

“commonplace” refers to “places” where we go to gather information and places where we go to store the information so that we can retrieve it (Haven 28). For Leigh, the Word was life. Gathering the right *words* was essential. But gathering is not enough. Words have to be stored in places where we can retrieve them (Erasmus *De Copia*). The mother gathers the word, and she teaches others where to gather and how to store words. It is a pleasant duty according to Leigh: “Oh my children, is not this a comfortable labour?” (8).⁸⁶

This parable of the bee transcends gender. It is not exclusively about a mother’s duty. It is the duty of every human being. She wants them to store up manna, and she offers her writing as an example. Her “legacy” is in her text. All is safely gathered in; all is organized. Leigh’s careful transitions serve as walls or dividers between the compartments in her beehive. Her careful transitions between chapters are evidence of a conscious artistic style (aesthetics) and the careful storage of commonplaces that recall important information to the mind. Margaret Zulick argues that “ethics without aesthetics loses the voice that gives it life, while aesthetics without ethics loses the life that gives it voice” (31). Leigh defined *wisdom* based on “manna” that she had gathered from her own reading: “The feare of God is the beginning of wisdom” (Proverbs 9:10). She describes herself as “feareful.” But interestingly, her fear causes her to act wisely and rationally by storing up the “hony” that leads to “eternal life.” (Leigh 19).

Both proems also seek to show *goodwill*. Goodwill will not expect any kind of reciprocation. Everything is done out of love for the audience. In his proem, James

⁸⁶ Leigh’s expressions of the sweetness of gathering knowledge is similar to Christine de Pizan’s. Christine says, “Ah learning—sweet, savory, and honeyed thing, supreme and preeminent among all treasure! How happy are they who tast you fully” (qtd. in Kempton 16). Speght has a similar expression in her *Mortalities Memorandum, with A Dreame Prefixed, imaginarie in manner; reall in matter*.

expects reciprocation. He ends his address with a threat. If Henry does not follow his counsel, then James says it would be best if he had not been born. James ends the proem with a curse. He threatens, “This book shall one day bee a witsse betwixt me and you; and shall procure to bee ratified in Heaven, the curst that in that case here I give unto you. For I protest before that Great GOD, I had rather not bee a Father and childless, then bee a Father of wicked children” (3). It is worth noting that Henry did not live long enough to succeed to the throne of his father but rather died of typhoid fever in 1612. However, James’s youngest son did succeed to the throne as Charles I of England.

Leigh shows goodwill because she does not expect any kind of reciprocation. In fact, the only thing she wants in return is for them to gather manna. Even if all of her efforts result in only one of them benefitting, she claims she is content. She expects nothing in return. In a way, the fact that she waited until after she died to have this published indicates her humility; it does not seem to indicate her fear of public censure. A fruitful comparison would be to include George Herbert in the discussion. Researchers believe he spent years composing poems about his own struggles with God. He edited, revised, and carefully organized the poetry into what we know as his collection of poetry *The Temple*. In his last illness, he sent the poems to his friend and biographer Nicholas Ferrar and told Ferrar to publish the book, “if he can think it may turn to the advantage of any dejected soul” (qtd. in Wall 14). Otherwise Ferrar was to burn them. George Herbert and Dorothy Leigh shared the same motivation. In Leigh’s case, however, the motivation stems from maternal duties associated with her domestic sphere.

Because of the stigma attached to publication, gentlemen and ladies often declined to publish or they went to elaborate lengths to explain how they were compelled by other

individuals to publish their writing. Often, instead of publishing their writings, they circulated their writing as manuscripts among a primary audience. By the end of Herbert's life, his primary audience may have been only himself and God, but that was enough for him. Neither Herbert nor Leigh had to die to publish. They made a rhetorical choice to defer publication until after death, and neither one of them probably anticipated the effect of their writing. Herbert's writing was initially well received. In Anne Clifford's "great picture," there is a copy of Herbert's poetry pictured in her library (Snook, *Women, Beauty, and Power*, 151). This indicates the value that she placed on Herbert's poetry.

Leigh's writing was also initially well received. However, Leigh's writing has been "moulding" for centuries. That would probably not have concerned Leigh any more than it would have concerned Herbert because of the "goodwill" that they had toward their audiences. Both of them would have probably been happy to know that their writing benefitted at least one person. Neither one of them sought for praise or any kind of monetary reward. That attitude of goodwill toward others transferred to the audience who valued their words more after their deaths because of the limited quantity of their writings that would now be available. Their goodwill created a solid foundation for the construction of ethos. In Leigh's case, the maternal goodwill, or maternal motivation, helped establish trust with her audience.

James lags far behind Leigh in any kind of comparison between the two of them because James made a negative impression in that liminal space between the writer and the text: the proem. Ultimately, Leigh's proem established a strong and positive ethos for Leigh. However, it did not have the same effect for James in *Basilikon Doron*.

Engaging *Basilikon Doron*

Basilikon Doron is ultimately the gift that was taken away. By that, Wormald means that many people felt that the “royal gift” was taken away (52). For many individuals *Basilikon Doron* did not reveal James’s “trew mind.” In the proem, James took advantage of the opportunity to introduce himself to England. James was not a bad king (Lee xi). He actively pursued peace, and no one questions his devotion to the Protestant faith. Many of his problems stemmed from his inability to understand the English people (Sommerville, “James I” 67; McIlwain lv; Wormald 53; Lee 308).

The Mothers Blessing engages *Basilikon Doron*. Leigh’s text directs a warning to James and his court by preaching a sermon from within her conduct manual. Her words appear to be directed at James or at those who should be mindful of James’s behavior, so that they *do* something about it. Appropriately, or ironically, she takes the text for her sermon from the Epistle of James in the New Testament. Perhaps she intended for readers to make an immediate association between her source text (the apostle James) and the monarch (James I). She centers the entire sermon on the verse found in James 4.14, which reads, *Submit yourselves to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.*

James constantly stressed his absolute authority. He disliked Puritans because of their insistence that God come before the monarch. James saw this type of attitude as a challenge to his absolute authority. He claimed the the puritans “pass over” certain aspects of his governance “with silence.” They will go only so far when it comes to “governor over all” (qtd. in Steward 199). Leigh explains that the general meaning of the verse in James is that Satan is a “cunning fisher” who catalogues men’s souls and tailors sharp hooks covered over with gold, silver, clay—some with one, some with another—

fashioned particularly for the “humour of every man.” As soon as the fish takes the bait, “[Satan] lets them play a while with it, but before it be long, hee drawth them out of the sweete stream, the water of life, and throweth them into a panne of boyling liqor” (196). Leigh’s sermon outlines the devil’s strategies, as well as the strategies that an individual needs in order to resist the devil. In *The Mothers Blessing*, idle pastimes are “hooks” to snare even “great Captians.” She warns:

Take heed of such sports and recreations, which have no warrant in the Word of God for many are carried away with idlenesse and pastimes, they can find no time to pray. . . Thou canst not redeem the time with vain recreations. I speake not to bar anie from lawfull recreation, but to warn you to take heed that for a little follish and idle pleasure, which presently commeth to an end, you lose not a glorious kingdom which endureth for ever. (173)

The problem with idle pastimes is that they distract people from doing things that they should be attending to. They were especially dangerous because they interfered with proper observance of the Sabbath. Activities such as hunting, gambling, dancing, and visiting alehouses were condemned.

Hunting

In *Basilikon Doron* James justifies hunting as a legitimate and even necessary royal diversion. James enjoyed hunting, and he spent a good deal of time at it. In *Basilikon Doron*, he explains, “I cannot omit here hunting, namely with running hounds; which is the most honourable and noblest sort thereof; . . . As for hawking I condemne it not” (56). He stresses that hunting should be in moderation. However, his actions indicated something different. James ultimately spent approximately half of his time

either at his hunting lodges or on progress. This was not the English way. James was more inclined to “live retired with eight or ten of his favourites than openly, as is the custome of the country and the desire of the people” (Stewart 177).

Maurice Lee explains that the political class regarded James as lazy and neglectful, as caring more for his hunting than for the people. One famous story explains that after James’s dog Jowler was waylaid overnight, he reappeared with a note tied round his neck. The note read, “Good Mr. Jowler, we pray you speak to the King (for he hears you every day, and so doth he not us) that it will please his Majesty to go back to London, for else the bontry, [the county] will be undone; all our provision is spent already and we are not able to entertain him longer” (309). These comments were more about politics than hunting. James was often absent from court due to his hunting excursions.

Hunting was seen as a vice by Protestant preachers who saw it as an idle pastime. John Dod explained that “if we come into a house and see many Physick boxes and glasses, we would conclude somebody were sick; so when we see Hounds and Hawks, and Cards and Dice, we may fear that there is some sick soul in the family” (“A Second Sheet of Old Mr. Dod’s Sayings”). This is an example of a house or a domestic sphere testifying against its inhabitants, much as the stones did in Habakkuk (See Chapter 3 of this dissertation).

And in *On Education* Erasmus complains, “How much time do we lose at dice, banqueting, beholding gay sights, playing with fools. We should be ashamed to say we lack leisure to do what needs to be done. Mothers give the example of the tediousness of childbirth and nursing.” In this instance, Erasmus furnishes Mother as an example of

dedication, the opposite of idleness. Readers who read *The Father's Blessing* and *The Mothers Blessing* side-by-side, as they were bound together, cannot help but notice James's dissembling and contrast that with images of a "carefull" mother.

Drunkenness

One visitor at James's court described it in this way: "[They] sit up in the night swilling and drinking, until they feele sleep call them to bed, and then they lie downe like brute beasts, never regarding the misspending of their time" (89). The drunkenness and debauchery of James's court was publicized in libels and broadsides that circulated widely to a mass audience. Sir John Harrington describes one after-dinner entertainment, which was supposed to represent Solomon and the coming of the Queen of Sheba;

But alas! . . . The lady who did play the Queen [of Sheba]'s part, did carry most precious gifts to both their majesties, but forgetting the steps arising to the canopy, overset her caskets into his Danish majesty's lap, and fell at his feet, though I rather think it was in his face. Much was the hurry and confusion; cloths, and napkins were at hand, to make all clean. His Majesty then got up and would dance with the Queen of Sheba; but he fell down and humbled himself before her, and was carried to an inner chamber and laid on a bed of state, which was not a little defiled with the presents of the Queen, which had been bestowed on his garments; such as wine, cream, jelly, beverage, cakes, spices, and other good matters. (qtd. in Stewart 237)

Harrington was disgusted by the entire scene: "I ne'er did see such lack of good order, discretion, and sobriety, as I have now done. . . the gunpowder fright is got out of all our

heads, and we are going on, hereabouts, as if the devil was contriving every man should blow up himself, by wild riot, excess, and devastation of time, and temperance. . . I wish I was at home” (qtd. in Stewart 237).

In *Basilikon Doron*, James counseled Henry to “beware of Drunkenesse, which is a beastlie vice, namely in a king” (51). James explained that the king was always on stage and that his behavior should be a model of virtue for everyone else to follow. He advised Henry to surround himself with men who were without vice: “See they be of good fame and without blemish, otherwise what can the people thinke, but that yee have chosen a company unto you, according to your owne humour” (35). His audience probably admired him for his wisdom, but his actions at court appeared to defy his words.

Drunkenness was a concern of Michel de Montaigne, as well. It was “gross and brutish. . . The worst state for a man is when he loses all consciousness and control of himself” (133). Montaigne offers some examples of Attalus Pausanias who would drink so much that he became “quite unaware of what he was doing, to abandon his fair body to mule-drivers and to many of the most abject scullions in his establishment, as if it were the body of some shore in a hedgerow” (134). He offers an additional example of a “widow of chastes reputation” who discovers that she is with child. The only way she knows to remedy the situation is to announce over the pulpit that she is willing to forgive the father, whoever he is, if the father will come forward and marry her. A young-farm laborer admitted to raping her while she was drunk. They married “and are still alive.” Such are the consequences of drunkenness (134).

John Dod’s *MALT* sermon was also a response to drunkenness. The last portion of the sermon was derived from the last letter of *MALT*, namely *T*. He concludes:

So much for this *Time* and *Text*, only by way of Caution, take this, a Drunkard is an Annoyance of Modesty, the trouble of Civility, the Spoyl of Wealth, the Destruction of Reason, the Brewers Agent, the Ale-Houses Benefactor, the Beggars Companion, the Constables Trouble, his Wives Woe, his Childrens Sorry, his Neighbours Scoff, his own Shame, a Waking-Swill-tub, the Picture of a Beast, and the Monster of a man. Say-wll and Doe-wll end both with a Letter, / Say wll is good, but Doe-well is better.

Leigh describes individuals who drink as “never content, never quiet, never [feeling] joy in their hearts. Though they laugh, their hearts are not quiet; for there is no peace to the ungodly. And this is the cause that they seek so much for pastime” (89). Though many drank themselves to excess and recovered from their revelry to work another day, some found their intoxicating vapors to be severely harmful to their health and—in fact—poison.

Satan’s “Sawce”

Leigh claims that an individual can become “drunk” in various ways. A person who cares too much for things of the world becomes drunk with “worldly trash.” She claims that Satan will “so sawce [your earthly trash] with poison, that he will deceive the wisest worldling in the world” (216). He saw himself as a renaissance Solomon: a wise, scholar king, a “living library, and a walking study” (Stewart 192).⁸⁷ The image of the “wisest worldling in the world” points toward James. Leigh points out that the wisest man of all can be fooled by Satan’s “Sawse” or poison.

⁸⁷ It is worth pointing out, however, that James often “peppered” his earnest pronouncements with crude jokes” (Stewart 191), and he delighted in “bad-tempered controversy” (Wormald 52)

Poison was a particularly frightening thing. It was usually considered “popish,” as it was affiliated with potions and witchcraft. Poison could make someone fall in love or become impotent. It was used by “weak women and cowardly men” (Bellamy 144). Poison was a staple on the stage of Jacobean revenge tragedies such as *Hamlet* and *The Duchess of Malfi*, but it also appeared in real life when it was smeared on Queen Elizabeth’s saddle horn and on the Earl of Essex’s shipboard chair (145). Poison was used to kill Thomas Overbury. It was seen as an inversion of patriarchal order and evidence of women’s uncontrollable passion. It was also seen as the devil’s net, waiting for prey. The penalty for poisoning was to be boiled to death.

Leigh continues her sermon by presenting a parable of a spider who hides in a dark hole and waits for the “sillie flie” to get entangled, and then the spider takes the fly as his own, “and even so Sathan lieth close, until hee see you entangled within the things of this world, and then hee claimeth the world, and you and all, for his own” (217).

These images of poison and tangled nets must have conjured up the Overbury scandal for Leigh’s readers. The entire affair was a web of intrigue, sex, and murder—by poison. In *Basilikon Doron*, James advises Henry to associate with godly friends and to deal justly, never to play favorites among his courtiers. The court should be examples to others. James advises Henry to take special heed of the company that he keeps. They should be “honest persons, not defamed or mixing filthy talke with merriness” (58). They should also be “of good fame and without blemish, otherwise what can the people thinke, but that yee have chosen a company unto you, according to your owne humour, and so have preferred these men, for the love of their vices and crimes, that ye knew them to be guiltie of”? (35). By 1616, James’s advice in *Basilikon Doron* would have been

ironic, and the entire situation at court gets continually worse up until James's death. As early as 1615, James's active support of the nullity of Frances Howard's marriage because of her claim that her husband was impotent with her was a well-known fact. Moreover, James failed to prosecute and punish Frances Howard and Robert Carr for their part in the poisoning of the Earl of Essex in 1616: "The nation's chief patriarch [James] had sanctioned a dangerous female sexual disorder that had resulted in an innocent man's death" (165). James's court never recovered from that. Bellamy argues that by sparing Frances Howard and Robert Carr—who by law should have been boiled to death—James had "sentenced the monarchy to death" (247).

Leigh continues her preaching by stressing the importance of obedience: to the true governor, God.⁸⁸ She references another scriptural passage: I Samuel 15.22. In this verse the prophet Samuel tells the king, Saul, that "to obey is better than to sacrifice." The context of the verse is that Saul's army was commanded to destroy everything after their battle with the Amalekites. However, Saul kept King Agag and the oxen alive, intending to sacrifice the oxen to God. Samuel tells Saul that this was a mistake and that God is more pleased with obedience than with sacrifice of oxen. Leigh's audience would have been familiar with this story, and they would have known the next verse, even though Leigh does not quote it. In the next verse, the prophet Samuel tells Saul, "Because thou hast cast away the word of the Lord, therefore, he hath cast away thee from being king" (I Sam 15.23). In other words, a king who is not strictly obedient to the true Governor (God) ceases to be king, according to the prophet. One of James's main contentions with the Puritans was that the Puritans put obedience to God over obedience

⁸⁸ The chapter includes several references to Governor and Father, distinguishing between an earthly governor and God, stressing that obedience belongs to God, not to the governor, because only God can help individuals avoid Satan's baits.

to the monarch. This is one of the central arguments of absolutism. According to James, there would never be any conflict between God and the monarch. If a monarch behaved badly, it was God's way of punishing the people. The people should never attempt to correct a king. Much of James's writing discusses those points, especially in *The Trew Law of Free Monarchies*.

Leigh's reference to Saul's disobedience can be interpreted in several ways. By 1616, many people thought James should be fighting for the Protestant cause on the continent, helping his daughter Elizabeth. Also, they would have noticed the irony in Leigh's claims that peers and princes "hold in the Prodigall—who would run away with the whole kingdom" (228). She notes that "Prodigalls" are covetous and unthankful of special favors granted by princes, and they will ultimately destroy the kingdom. It is worth noting the Robert Carr was one of the king's "favorites" who was a notorious prodigal. She claims "Prodigalls" are like "laden asses" that "follow the Divell with his treasure, and make him their Lord and Master" (190). In an image that recalls the lavish and expensive masques of James's court, Leigh continues. Prodigals, she says, "dance after the Divells pipe." It is as difficult to stop as it is for a man to stop running downhill once he has started.

Her sermon is well organized and coherent. It drives home the point that Satan tailors his baits to match his prey. In that way, Satan is the ultimate rhetor, who knows his audience so well that he knows which kind of bait to use for each victim. Then he poisons the bait. Covetness and prodigality lead to the traps he sets. At the end of her sermon, Leigh issues the call to action, to *do something*. She has a simple and clear call. She claims:

Some wise and learned men have disputed, whether the covetous or the prodigal be the worse member in the Common-wealth; but I pray God you nor yours be none of both. . . . And thus I leave them, and pray to God for Christs sake, they and wee may leave both those and all other sins, and take hold of Christ by faith, and live through him with God for ever and ever (230).

Once again, she references “wise and learned men” and once again, she uses clear and plain prose—but it is far from lifeless. The rapid-fire one syllable words exude confidence and common sense. For example, consider the phrase *but I pray to God that you nor yours be none of both* (eleven one-syllable words). In this case, Leigh is wiser than the “wise and learned” men who spend time debating what is worse between two evils. Leigh rises above both evils (“prodigality” and “covetousness”) and in clear and direct prose invites others to do the same.

Putting Leigh’s *Mothers Blessing* next to James’s *Basilikon Doron* and reading them together is enlightening because we at once can see Leigh’s intellectual abilities at work. We sense the maternal ethos that she weaves into her arguments as she references “godly” fathers and then rises above them, augmenting her own authority. We get a sense of her biblical knowledge. Leigh has followed Perkins’s instructions for “preaching” a sermon. When I began this project, I had no intention of positioning Leigh next to godly men and sermons. However, after making myself at home in *The Mothers Blessing* I find that Leigh has positioned herself among “godly” men and their sermons. It is as if she has demanded to be “heard” in their company, but she stays within the boundaries of the conduct manual genre, which situates her firmly in the domestic sphere, so her voice continues to rise from an acceptable (and yet complex) *space*. Conduct

manuals offer instructions for people, and so do sermons. Her genre choice of the conduct manual puts her within reach of a sermon genre, and by carefully constructing maternal ethos, her zeal and rhetorical abilities allow her to cross generic boundaries into the print sermon genre.

Leigh began her sermon or response to James by citing a scripture in the Book of James. That particular scripture has a marginal note that reads, “He that giveth himself to the world divorceth himself from God and breaketh the band of the holy and spiritual marriage” (Geneva Bible, James 4.4 marginal note). If this scripture can be interpreted as a caution for King James, and I believe that is a fair interpretation, then perhaps James is not the ideal “father” to be paired (as a source text) with Dorothy Leigh’s *Mothers Blessing*. The match is too bizarre, and James’s actions have necessitated a divorce not only between himself and God, but between the *Mothers Blessing* and *The Fathers Blessing*.

There is a more logical text to compare to Leigh. A better “Father” for *The Mothers Blessing* is one of the “holy Fathers.” I propose that John Dod’s Bathshebae’s Instructions functions well as a source text and a “Father” for Leigh’s *Mothers Blessing*. It also presents us with an excellent opportunity to see how Leigh directs religious discourse directly at the preachers.

A New Father for *The Mothers Blessing*

Ultimately, *The Mothers Blessing* and *The Fathers Blessing* appear to be incompatible. They have very little in common. If the reading public initially perceived the two authors as being in some kind of conversation with one another, then readers could not help but notice the contradictions between them as they read these two texts. I

understand why Catharine Gray argues that *Basilikon Doron* is a source text for *The Mothers Blessing*. But a more effective way to articulate the relationship might be that they contradict one another. After dwelling a while in Leigh's *A Mothers Blessing*, I do not think that Leigh considered *Basilikon Doron* as a source. Even though they do address common issues, Leigh clearly takes a stance that is highly critical of the king and his court. A more logical choice for a source text for *The Mothers Blessing* is John Dod's *Bathshebaes Instructions to her Sonne*. Adding Dod's sermon to this strange marriage of texts might seem odd, but Dod's addition brings Leigh's writing into focus.

In this chapter, I wanted to illustrate how Leigh and James were bound together in what initially appears to be the ultimate handbook for early modern parents. Instead, it turns out to be an invitation to contrast the parents. James started out badly by his negative proem that attacked his audience and could be interpreted in various ways. Leigh took advantage of her proem to build maternal ethos that created a trusting and positive relationship with her audience. She portrayed herself as "fearfull, faithfull, and carefull." She exudes virtue, wisdom, and good will. Leigh illustrates her knowledge of problematic behavior at court. She also showcases her understanding of biblical exhortations that deal with those problematic concerns. Dorothy Leigh joins a chorus of voices echoing across the first two decades of the seventeenth century. The voices are familiar with one another. They discuss common concerns. It gets a little bit crowded and chaotic at times, and Leigh's voice has been muffled over time. However, compared to his Royal Highness King James VI and I, Leigh seems to have the most common sense. In this case, Mother knows best.

CHAPTER 6

A SERMON BY ANY OTHER NAME

Move the people to provide themselves a Preacher, tell them of their wants, speake to the Magistrates, mourne to see the Alehouses full, and the Church of God emptie (Leigh 234)

What's in a name? A rose by any other name would smell as sweet.⁸⁹ A sermon by any other name is still a sermon. So far, Leigh has been in the company of a fencing master and a king. In this chapter, I place her in the company of godly men. However, before I do that, I am reminded that even during the renaissance, “preachers” were not exclusively men. When the Protestant martyr Anne Askew (1545) was accused of “preaching” prior to her execution, she responded with a question, “I asked [the Lord Mayor] how many women he had seen go into the pulpit and preach? He said he never saw none. Then I said he ought to find no fault in poor women, except they had offended the law” (qtd. in *Foxe's Book of Martyrs* 23). Both Askew and her accusers may have considered her actions “preaching” (Hickerson 55), but the definitions were too slippery to establish concrete evidence against her.

In the long run, however, definitions did not matter as much as perceptions. Askew was tortured so severely that she could not walk to the stake to be burned; she had to be carried on a chair. Within a generation of Askew's execution, Leigh's *Mothers Blessing* was published. One of the differences between Askew and Leigh is that Leigh did not “preach” orally to the public as far as we know, but then again, neither did Askew as far as definitions went. Defining “public preaching” can be as difficult as defining “public” and “preaching,” as I hope this project has illustrated. I have argued throughout

⁸⁹ *Romeo and Juliet* 2.2.445-45

this project that Leigh “preaches” a series of sermons. The Lord Mayor directed similar accusations toward Askew. He claimed she was “preaching” sermons.

My purpose in this chapter is to illustrate how I see Leigh’s discourse fitting into the sermon genre; however, this is not an attempt to redefine the sermon genre. I would like to investigate the possibility that because of her remarkable zeal and earnestness, Leigh is able to gain access to public discourse. I reason that because the sermon genre was a tightly structured genre it transcends gender, as I explain later in this chapter. The sermon genre is subject to what Risa Applegarth names “rhetorical scarcity” (“Rhetorical Scarcity” 453). Some types of printed sermons constituted a highly esteemed genre, an outward sign of inward piety. Sermons in general were complex genres as they were delivered orally in highly rhetorical situations and also delivered in the newly formed genre of the “print” sermon.

In addition, my goal is to show Leigh as a woman who is preaching *and* writing, two unusual activities for a middle-class woman in the early years of the seventeenth century. I place her in the company of the godly men she references in her conduct manual. I would like to investigate the way that Leigh participates in the sermon genre more specifically than I have in the previous chapters by placing Leigh beside one of the godly fathers whom I am convinced she references specifically in her manual. My goal is to speculate about how Leigh inhabits the sermon genre. She knows and follows the “rules” for sermons as outlined by William Perkins. No matter what we call it, it can be named a sermon. I also argue that because of her maternal ethos she transcends gender limitations, at least in the printed form of the sermon. She is confident, intelligent, and articulate.

To accomplish my goals, I offer my rationale for choosing John Dod's *Bathshebaes Instructions* as a comparison text. I then briefly summarize and analyze Dod's sermon in the larger context of sermons in general, and because print sermons are a unique subgenre, I spend some time exploring the genre in more detail than I did in the Interchapter. Leigh's discourse is a sermon—preached by a female—that instructs male preachers about their duties. Similar to Dod's *Bathshebaes Instructions*, it is an exhortation and a deliberative piece of rhetoric designed to “move” the audience.

Rationale for Choosing John Dod's *Bathshebaes Instructions*

In 1614, John Dod and William Hinde published *Bathshebaes Instructions to her Sonne Lemuel: Containing a frutifull and plaine exposition of the last Chapter of the Proverbs Describing the duties of a Great-man, the vertues of a Gratiuous Woman, Penned by a godly and learned man, now with God*. Lemuel is a name that refers to Solomon of the Old Testament. *Bathshebaes Instructions* is a good comparison to Leigh's manual for three reasons.

One reason that *Bathshebaes Instructions* provides a logical comparison text for Leigh is because it is a sermon in the form of a conduct manual. This illustrates the slipperiness of definitions, but it also opens up opportunities for discussions about genres and those who inhabit them. In *Bathshebaes Instructions*, Bathsheba gives instructions to her son Solomon. In a way, she is doing something similar to what Leigh is doing. However, Bathsheba's son will be a king, so in this sense, Dod and Hinde are doing something similar to what James is doing by offering instructions for a future king. *Bathshebaes Instruction* adds an additional dimension because Solomon offers a description of a “woman of strength,” outlining the characteristics that form a pattern for

others to follow. In that way, we see a son offering a pattern (even instructions) for an ideal woman. *Bathshebaes Instructions*, then, offers us a multi-leveled conduct manual layered with instructions for sons and mothers. But that is only part of it. After each set of instructions, the authors show how the instructions for the mother apply to the father and how instructions for the son apply to the mother—and to all. *Bathshebaes Instructions*, like Leigh's *Mothers Blessing*, moves beyond gender to moral behavior in general. In that way *Bathshebae's Instructions* is much like Leigh's writing. It transcends gender even as the text draws its authority and exempla from gender. *Bathshebaes Instructions* differs from my previous comparison texts, for it offers a view of Leigh's writing from a different perspective. Leigh clearly values and admires the sermons of "godly" fathers. By placing herself in their company, we get an idea of how Leigh values herself and how she views her role in society.

In addition, *Bathshebaes Instructions* is a good choice because Dod is a lot like Leigh in his religious leanings. For my purposes, I will refer to only one of the authors of *Bathshebaes Instructions*, namely John Dod. Dod often collaborated with Robert Cleaver and with other writers. For example, Dod's famous exposition on the Ten Commandments earned him the nickname of *Decalogue Dod*, but the published version of the sermon lists Dod and Cleaver as the authors. For my purposes, I will be discussing only John Dod simply to make my task more manageable. I am not at all certain how Dod and Hinde (or Dod and Cleaver for that matter) separated their duties in this publication. John Dod and Leigh seem to share similar religious beliefs. Both were reformists, but not separatists. Puritan Calvinists stressed the importance of divine election as the true test of Church membership. They encouraged individuals to evaluate

their lives for signs of divine favor. The “thrust of Anglicanism was outward, toward society, seeking to encompass the total life of the nation in its political and social as well as its religious dimension” (Wall 9). Neither Dod nor Leigh wanted to break with the church or monarchy, but both wanted to reform the Church from within.

Finally, Dod is a good comparison text because he *is* one of the Church “Fathers” whom Leigh references in *The Mothers Blessing*. Leigh explains that “some have had their Bibles taken away, that they could not reade: preachers have been banished, that could not heare; they have been separated from company, that they could not have publike prayer” (105-106). When she describes preachers who were silenced or had their living taken away from them and who were separated from their “flock,” John Dod fits the description. He was ejected from two separate livings in the early 1600s. Often when silenced by one bishop these preachers would move to another flock (Collinson, *The Religion of Protestants* 279). Several of Leigh’s themes are shared by Dod, and he could have provided source material for her own writing. Dod was, after all, referred to as the “fittest man in all England for a pastoral office (qtd. in Collinson, *The Religion of Protestants* 111), and his sermon on the Ten Commandments was recommended as essential for even the “poorest man’s library” (Field).

Dod gathered and dispensed sententiae. Fifty years after his death, broadsides with “Old Man Dod’s sayings” were circulated widely. Like Leigh, however, his writing has been largely neglected and is probably one of those writings “molding” in men’s closets. Dod used plain and familiar language. It was said that “poor and simple people that never knew what religion meant, when they had gone to hear him, could not choose but talk of his sermon. It mightily affected poor creatures to hear the mysteries of God

(by his excellent skill that way) brought down to their own language and dialect” (qtd. in Collinson *The Religion of Protestants* 231).

Summary and Analysis of Sermons

Bathshebaes Instructions is a sermon. The term “sermon” has a long and complex history. Because this is the only comparison text that is classified as a sermon, I would like to extend the definition of a sermon that I offered in Interchapter to include a more detailed description of the complexities that existed between the oral and the printed sermon.

From Oratory to the Printed Sermon

The word *sermon* comes from the Latin word *sermo* which means *talk, discourse, or speech*. In the early modern sense, it meant “a discourse, usually delivered from a pulpit and based upon a text of Scripture, for the purpose of giving religious instructions.” Sermons can be “written or published work” (OED). Another definition is “a discourse (spoken or written) on a serious subject, containing instruction or exhortation, something that affords instruction or example.” (OED)

By the early 1600s preachers literally had a captive audience. The Act of 1593 required that everyone over the age of sixteen attend Sunday church service. The punishment for violating the act was to be “hanged” or banished. Sermons were the most effective means of presenting new ideas to a wide audience, but not everyone was pleased with all of the “new” ideas. They were especially displeased with preachers whom they viewed as underqualified. There was a general emphasis on ensuring a trained clergy. Puritans especially demanded to hear the word. They saw it as essential.

For instance, Katherine Whitehead disrupted a sermon about the duties of women by shouting, “You do your job, and then I’ll do mine” (qtd. in Lucas 226).

Jeanne Shami challenges the notion that women were separated from the practice of sermons. She stresses that women were subjects of sermons, patrons of sermons, consumers, transmitters, audience, and *preachers*. She relates that Katherine Brettergh was praised for “upbraiding her husband for being angry on the Lord’s Day and for oppressing poor tenants by collecting rents” (158). According to Shami, a wife correcting her husband was a form of preaching, and surprisingly, it was admired in Brettergh’s case. Shami also presents Lady Anne Harcourt who was commended for “enforcing a household regimen of Sunday services, including hearing the word read, examining her maidservants on the sermon’s content, and repeating it for their benefit” (159). In this sense, Harcourt was preaching a sermon to a select group of household servants, but her influence extended beyond those in her immediate household. Shami claims that women such as Harcourt were “capable religious speakers and mediators of the Word, exerting their religious influence beyond their families, over their ministers, and sometimes over the whole parish” (159).⁹⁰

We don’t know much about the thousands of ordinary men and women with their Bibles and day-long study (Daniell 271). However, we know they were familiar with the

⁹⁰ I acknowledge John Bowers for pointing out that female “preaching” in the household has a long tradition in the Christian religion and that, conversion within a family usually started with the women. For example, in *The Confessions*, St. Monica preached the new faith to her wayward son Augustine until he finally converted. Augustine writes “I solicited from the piety of my mother and from the Church (which is the mother of us all) the baptism of thy Christ, my Lord and my God. The mother of my flesh was much perplexed, for with a heart pure in thy faith, she was always in deep travail for my eternal salvation... Thus, at that time I ‘believed’ along with my mother and the whole household, except my Father. But he did not overcome the influence of my mother’s piety in me, nor did he prevent my believing in Christ, although he had not yet believed in him. For it was her desire, o my God, that I should acknowledge thee as my Father rather than him. In this thou didst aid her to overcome her husband, to whom she yielded obedience to thee, who does so command” (1.11.17).

Bible and that they read sermons. It is estimated that approximately 2,000 sermons were printed in the period from 1603 to 1640 and that the average number of titles in the first half of the seventeenth century roughly doubled from about 250 per year to 500 (Rigney 204). This number includes material other than sermons, but it also shows that sermons represent a relatively significant percentage of the total number of printed texts. It would be a mistake to consider all of the books which poured from the presses in the early years of the seventeenth century merely as the work of detached individuals (McIlwain lviii). The texts interacted with one another across genres. During this time period sermons would have been read aloud in the household, probably by mothers such as Leigh.

The years from 1590 to 1640 were also “a wholly exceptional period in the history of English preaching” partly because of the shift away from spoken discourse toward the written word (Rigney 205). It was due in large measure to the Puritan emphasis on the sermon. After 1640, the sermon would never be quite so important again (207). During the early years of the century, the written word began to prevail over the oral tradition of delivering a sermon. The dominance of print meant that oral culture moved to second-class status. The printed sermon became a valuable outward symbol of a person’s inward piety. One anonymous pamphlet described the print phenomenon in this way: “We olde men are old Chronicles, and when our tongues goe, they are not clockes to tell onely the time present, but large books unclasped, and our speches, like leaves turnd over and over, discover wonderes that are long since past” (qtd. in Rigney 207). Sermons that were preached necessarily differed from those that were published (Dixon 461). They were usually carefully revised and edited. Sometimes they were printed by listeners who had taken copious notes.

Rosemary Dixon describes print sermons as “two-penny chapbooks hawked about the streets like ballads.” However, she notes that there was another kind of sermon as well. It included “elite occasional sermons preached at court or parliament, as well as sermons of ‘learned Composure’ by well-educated theologians” (460). She notes that the most critical attention has largely been focused on elite “occasional’ sermons,” which included sermons preached before important audiences at court or parliament on fast days or festivals. Those sermons provided a vehicle for the preachers to comment on public affairs (462). The public saw their own times in the books of the Old Testament. The books of Kings and Samuel in the Old Testament were extremely popular with the people. In a sermon one week before James’s son Prince Henry died, Daniel Price described the kind of moral “rust” he saw spreading under Henry’s father King James: “In this dyastrous time of my distracted meditations I have beene at a maze to consider whether these prophecies. . . be Oracles for Jerusalem only, or the Chronicles of our owne lands.” (qtd. in Mccullough 194). In other words, they saw their own kings and their own concerns in those stories of the Old Testament. Only a few years earlier, the audience would have been dependent on a preacher to supply his own interpretation, but now audiences could read the biblical stories for themselves. Not only that, but they had access to the Geneva Bible that provided expanded commentary on the verses (a fact that greatly annoyed James).⁹¹

⁹¹ In spite of the newly translated King James Version (1611) of the Bible, the preferred Bible was the Geneva Bible. For the first time, the Bible was divided into chapters and numbered verses, with headings and commentary. James saw much of this commentary as seditious, as references to “tyrants” were numerous. A major concern of the commentaries dealt with the authority of kings and the consequences of “evil” kings.

Summary and Analysis of *Bathshebaes Instructions*

In 1614, John Dod and William Hinde published *Bathshebaes Instructions to her Sonne Lemuel: Containing a fruitful and plaine exposition of the last Chapter of Proverbs. Describing the duties of a Great-man, the vertues of a Gracious Woman*. *Bathshebae's Instructions* is an exposition of Proverbs Chapter 31.⁹² It offers instructions that Bathsheba gave to her son King Solomon. It is a practical handbook for a king, from the king's fearful, faithful, and careful mother; however, it also contains the son's description of the Mother, "a woman of strength". The first chapters are Bathsheba's instructions to Solomon. The remaining chapters are Solomon's description of Bathsheba. The authors separate the book into chapters. At the beginning of each chapter they quote verses from the chapter. Then they explain the "scope and drift" of the verse, followed by a more in-depth explanation and by examples to illustrate their points.

The preface to *Bathshebaes Instructions* was written by William Hinde. He reminds readers that Proverbs 31 contains "hidden verse" that will lead the contemplative reader to "sanctified illumination." Hinde explains that the content of the chapter was too precious for him to keep "in my closet for my owne private benefit." In other words, this chapter should definitely not be "molding" in men's closets or be motheaten in their

⁹² Hinde was the author of another popular text. He wrote a funeral sermon for Katherine Brettreggh, who had died. There was a controversy about whether or not her death was a "good" death. He, and others, argues that Satan would not have put up such a struggle for her soul if she were not an elect soul. So they argue that she fought until the end of her life and ultimately came out victorious. The "sermon" is a conduct manual in that it sets her up as an example. She was known for her piety and for constantly encouraging and influencing her husband (who was a magistrate) in his duties both secular and religious. She constantly feared that he was not forgiving enough and constantly admonished him to be a better Christian. Controversy over Brettreggh's death led to riots and public uprisings in which women were active participants, even with pitchforks and physical defense of themselves and their territories (Phillippy 104) Another aspect of the controversy is that at death, religious issues surfaced in obvious ways. What kind of a burial is correct? What about prayers for the dead and dying last rites? People had strong opinions and acted on them, to the point of violence.

chests while their Christian brethren “quake with cold in the street for want of covering” (5). The book is directed to the sons and daughters of men, particularly those who are “eminent” and destined for public service (1). Leigh could have been referring directly to this preface when she lamented that so many godly books were “moulding” in men’s closets. She may have been presenting a gentle reminder to individuals to take Dod and Hinde’s book out of their chests.

Bathshebaes Instruction includes examples of practical application. That is to say, the authors comment about what is happening in *their* day and in *their* commonwealth. The contemporary events correspond to the situations in ancient Israel. Seeing *their* times mirrored in Old Testament times was common, and individuals were familiar with the stories and the marginal commentary that accompanied them, including commentary from popular print and oral sermons or from the margins of the Geneva Bible. The authors make a point, however, that in both parts—the instructions of Bathsheba to her son and the description of Bathsheba—the instructions and descriptions apply to both male and female. In several instances the authors write, “with a little twisting of the word, the same applies to men [or women].”

Although the authors explain the verses, they stress that there are “hidden verses” that need “illumination” through personal meditation. Readers are responsible to gather from the scriptures fruit that will benefit them. Active reading is essential to meditation. Readers need to contemplate deeply in order to gain the fruit that the scriptures offer. They should follow the example of George Herbert who exclaims “Oh Book! Infinite sweetness! Let my heart/ Suck ev’ry letter, and a honey gain. . . hev’n lies flat in thee, / Subject to ev’ry mounter’s bended knee” (“The H. Scriptures I” 27). Dorothy Leigh’s

“Labourous bee” does the same thing as it goes about gathering honey. She calls it a “comfortable labour” to gather spiritual food daily for the soul (16).

Dod and Hinde suggest that the teaching found in Proverbs 31 (and in *Bathshebaes Instructions*) are applicable for both public and private life. These teachings are also for both men and women. They should be recorded in a book that is organized alphabetically and committed to memory so that “every verse being diligently and carefully weighed and considered, may be the more faithfully retained in memory. . . the more apply our wits and minds unto it. . . that no part of them doe escape us” (19). Leigh echoes their words. Gather the manna. Store it. Learn it. Raise children. Teach them. Be an example.

The first chapters of *Bathshebaes Instructions* include Bathsheba’s instructions to Solomon. The opening verses of the chapter outline Bathsheba’s reasons for writing. She must write so that Solomon will have access to her counsel after she is gone. The authors explain that the “scope and drift” of the opening verses stress that mother’s motivation must be “love.” She should stress that she writes because she loves her son “whereby she giveth him to understand, that her love towards him was greater, and that by the fervent and loving affection of her minde, she would teach him more things than by her words he could attaine to” (6). That is to say Solomon will probably not comprehend everything Bathsheba has to teach simply through oral transmission. She must write. The words of the mother become a testimony that the son is “beloved.” The words become Bathsheba’s legacy of love to her Solomon. Dorothy Leigh echoes these words nearly verbatim in *The Mothers Blessing*, especially when she compares herself to the nursing mother who cannot forget the child she has cared for (See Chapter 3 of this

project). Her love for her children motivates her actions, but even her maternal affection is a controlled emotion.

The authors explain that Bathsheba's counsel "ought to give comfort and courage unto parents, that there is such plentiful fruit of the mothers instruction, prayers, and vows" (7). In other words, it works. The "fruit" of Bathsheba's instruction brought "blessing of piety, wisdom, and glory of Solomon" (7). Bathsheba can take some of the credit for Solomon's wisdom. The authors explain that although both parents share in the responsibility, Mother's love is especially potent. They then move to a discussion of what is happening in their own day. They claim that Bathsheba set an example:

She did witness and testify this her love, by a most diligent, and religious education of [Solomon], contrary to that which parents and mother (especially in these days) do; which express their love to their children in cloathing them in gay apparel, feeding them with delicate meates, allowing them greater liberty, and licence of life, and by over much cockering them" (4).

They claim that such "cockering" is especially detrimental for young people who will one day "live in the public sight of men, and as it were in the face of the common wealth, and of the Church" (4). Similarly, Leigh begins *The Mothers Blessing* by expressing her concern that parents hazard their own health and welfare to "enrich" their children "forgetting those things that be eternal" (4).

The authors stress that Bathsheba's counsel is especially important because no one dares to correct or punish a king. No one makes kings accountable for their decisions. But apparently mothers can. It is even more important to counsel a king because his decisions affect a great number of people. *Bathshebas Instruction* is an

important conduct book because through the persona of Bathsheba, the authors counsel the king (James) by applying Bathsheba's counsel to their own day and their own king. The verse they explicate is "Give not thy strength to women, nor thy waies to those that destroy kings." The authors explain that David and Solomon both made poor choices that nearly cost them their kingdoms, and if David and Solomon could fall then "where shall that man be found whose sinnes he will spare" (10). These verses provide Dod and Hinde with an excellent opportunity to write misogynistic literature, but they do not. Instead, they lay the blame for David and Solomon's actions at the feet of David and Solomon.

After they advise the king about choosing a wife, the discussion turns to Solomon's description of "a woman of strength." The remainder of Proverbs Chapter 31 is generally considered Solomon's description of his mother, so in a sense, it is Solomon's tribute to his mother, but the authors stress that it is a mirror for women and for men. The discussion of choosing a proper wife continues into the sections of the sermon that describe the Bathsheba, the "woman of strength." No effort should be spared to find a godly wife.

Ironically, this mirrors James's own counsel in *Basilikon Doron*. He had counseled Henry that even though it may seem that there are few Protestant contestants for a bride, Henry should exert all of his efforts to secure a Protestant bride. He counsels:

For although that to my great regrate, the number of any Princes of power and account, professing our Religion, bee but very small; and that therefore this advice seems to be the more strait and diffcile; et ye have deeply to weigh, and to consider upon these doubts, how ye and your wife can bee of one flesh, and keep

unitie betwixt you being members of two opposite Churches; disagreement in Religion bringeth ever with it disagreement in maners; and dissention betwixt your Preachers and her, wil breed and foster a dissention among your subjects, takin their example from your family, besides the peril of the evill education of your children. Neith prinde you that ye wil be able to frame and make her as ye please, that deceived Salomon the wisest King that ever was. (James, *Basilikon Doron* 40-41)

Bathsheba also gives instructions about avoiding drunkenness, as well as choosing a wife. Both of those topics are particularly important for kings and those who serve in public places, but they are also important for every individual. The authors continually stress that their counsel is for men and women, rich and poor, master and servant.

Bathshebaes Instructions discuss the proper use of “goods” and the dangers of being idle. They say that we should run to our duty as “hounds on the hunt,” assuring us that we will sleep better if we work hard. They offer us the example of Bathsheba who is up before the sun rises and still working when the sun goes down.

In one particularly interesting chapter, the authors describe *confidence*. It is worth remembering that they are describing confident women, but the description extends to all individuals. Confidence comes from careful preparation, and it is equated with *quietness*. A chosen and dignified confidence is a singular beauty (for men and for women). No one is clothed if his or her mind is naked. Fig leaves will not cover a naked mind, for “even she which is most neatly and daintily clothed is but naked and bare before God, the Angels, and holy men” if her mind is not cultivated (61). There are two parts to the inward clothing of the mind: confidence and virtue. The authors explain that Jesuits tie

women to the spindle and bar them from “conference,” but the true religion teaches confidence and encourages women to participate in “conference” regarding the word of God. A “woman of strength” should be a “speaker of the word” (61). “Doctrine resteth on her tongue, and he doth plainly declare, how often it dwelt in her house” (62).

A woman of strength speaks out of the abundance of her heart, and even when her husband is silent, he praises her by his good works. The authors explain that the “piety and goodness” of the woman is probably at least partly responsible for the man’s virtue. In other words, she has been an example of virtue for him to follow. Lady Brilliana Harley is an example. In a letter to Lord Harley, Brilliana’s brother wrote, “In your howse the order of things is inverted. You write to me of cheese and my sister writes about a good scholler.” It was noted that she “rather transcends him” in religious qualities. Christopher Hill notes that such was “not uncommon” in godly gentry families (*The Religion of Protestants* 169).

Bathshebas Instructions ends by explicating the final verses of Proverbs 31: “Her children shall rise and pronounce her blessed, and her husband shall praise her. . . Give unto her the fruite of her hands, and let her works praise her in the gates.” The authors explain that Solomon’s virtuous life is a form of praise for Bathsheba. By extension, the virtuous lives of sons and daughters praise the mother (and father). I might add that the written record of Bathsheba’s instructions memorialize her as well and offer a form of praise for her. The same could be said for Dorothy Leigh. By publishing her works, her sons praise her for her wisdom and her teachings. Dod and Hinde claim that *tongues* and *pens* should praise her, but also, our *shoulders* should lift her into an open place to be seen of all. Praise should not be “dume and cold.” Instead tongues should use “wit and

learning” and “all the flowers and colours of their eloquence, wherewithal they garnish and set forth” praises (76).

All in all, *Bathshebaes Instructions* is a conduct book not only for a king but for all individuals. It is unique in the way it approaches gender and in the constant insistence on accountability for kings and for those who serve publically in the commonwealth and in the Church. It moves from the intimate domestic space of the home to the open spaces of the public domain. Dorothy Leigh’s parable of the Labourous Bee is a retelling of Proverbs Chapter 31. For this reason her *Blessing* is directly linked to *Bathshebas Instructions* as well as for other reasons. She exemplifies the “woman of strength” described in Proverbs 31. *Bathshebaes Instructions* is similar to *The Mothers Blessing* in several ways, not the least of which is the tone and attitude. It is unique in its direct counsel to a king. Dorothy Leigh’s last chapters are also unusual in that they offer direct counsel to preachers.

Engaging Preachers

The last chapters of *The Mothers Blessing* are reserved for the preachers. Her discourse is not an instruction manual for preachers, such as Perkins and Herbert wrote. Instead, it is an exhortation—deliberative rhetoric—directed at preachers. It is also directed at a broader audience that shares the responsibility to “move” the people to provide an adequate preacher for the people. Jennifer Heller noted that this exhortation for a congregation to control the preacher and the message from the pulpit would have been interpreted as a challenge to the authority of the Church (110). Leigh’s sermon encourages the congregation to take responsibility for their own personal spiritual welfare.

Leigh begins by reminding the hearers that “When two or three be gathered together in his name, he will be with thee: pray that GOD may send his word plentifully.” Then she references Proverbs 29.18: “Where there is no vision, the people decay, but he that keepeth the law is blessed,” and finally she references Philipians 2:27: “Only let your conversation be as it becometh the Gospel of Christ, that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your matters, that ye continue in one spirit, and in one mind, fighting together through the faith of the Gospel.” These scriptures provide the text for her sermon.

She explains that these scriptures mean that people should go and hear sermons. Even if they “feare that there will be little,” or in other words that if the sermon will not edify them, they should go anyway, and get the “little” that they can. She writes that “on the Sabbath day, the Lord calleth him to him . . . and breatheth into his face the breath of life again and renueth in him the image of God again, that was decayed by his sin, and so he goeth home a newed man” (232). Once again, her prose is reminiscent of George Herbert’s poetry. He describes Sunday in this way: “Thou [Sunday] art a day of mirth: / And where the weekdays trail on ground, / Thy flight is higher, as thy birth. / O let me take thee at the bound, / Leaping with thee from sev’n to sev’n / Till that we both, being tossed from earth, / Fly hand in hand to heav’n!” (Herbert “Sunday” 33)

Any discussion of Sabbath observance was subject to James’s censure. Heller relates what could potentially befall an individual who expressed unconventional opinions about the Sabbath. She relates:

In 1618, John Traske was barred from the clergy, fined, imprisoned for life, nailed to the pillory by the ear, and sentenced to be branded with a ‘J’ to symbolize his

supposed Jewish beliefs after preaching Saturday sabbatarianism. He was later charged not just with heresy, but with sedition, a move perhaps calculated to portray Puritans as ‘deviant and divisive politically, not just religiously. (113-114)

Both Dod and Leigh share strong ties with Sabbatarianism. Sabbatarianism means to have an attitude toward the Sabbath similar to that possessed anciently by the Jews (Collison *The Religion of Protestants* 171). Sabbatarianism was not a new concept. It was “part of a recurring pattern in the history of the English Sabbath, reasserting and reaffirming the doctrine and discipline that had been part of English religious life for centuries” (K. Parker 219).

Although Leigh is not encouraging the extreme Sabbatarian ideology that the Sabbath should be celebrated on Saturday rather than Sunday, she is advocating an emphasis on Sabbath activity that James considered illegal. When she suggests that individuals should shop around for a minister who will meet their spiritual needs, Leigh is encouraging an activity that was subject to fines and possible imprisonment. One minister forbade his congregation to go and hear John Dod preach. This minister feared that his own congregation would not want to come back and hear his sermons. Listening to sermons was somewhat like attending the theater. David Daniell claims that drama and sermons shared common roots. He says that “to hear a long sermon, a speech of carefully crafted plain English delivered from only a few feet away. Such experience in English parish life, repeated in the almost nine thousand parishes throughout the land, has obvious relation to the later, albeit much heightened, experience of the London theatres” (247).

In 1611 John Seller compared bringing forth a sermon in print to removing it from its initial appearance on the stage of the pulpit and putting it into the larger and more complicated public stage in which he must serve as the advertiser of his wares. Humphrey Sydenham lamented in 1637 that : “Tis a criticall age we live in where Divines and Poets have alike fate and misery, most men frequenting Churches as they doe Theaters, either to clap or hisse; and it is with the Auditors of the one, as with the Spectators of the other, sometimes they bestow their Laurell, sometimes their Thistle. .. Unhappy Creatures that we are to be thus fed with Aire, as if we no liv’d by the Spirit of God, but the breath of the people”. (209) Preachers saw themselves as functioning in God’s stead. They were “Captains” who had a responsibility to their congregations.

Attacking the Captains

In the opening portion of the sermon, Leigh claims that if the preacher does not fill his duty, the congregation has a responsibility. The marginal notes of the Geneva Bible outline what this might mean. The text was Philipians 2.27, and it was about “continuing in one spirit and in one mind, fighting together through the faith of the gospel.” The notes explain the responsibility of the congregation:

Having set these things down before, in a manner of a preface, he descendeth now to exhortations, warning them first of all, to consent both in doctrine and mind, and after that being thus knit together with those common bands they continue through the strength of faith to bear all adversity, in such sort that they admit nothing unworthy the profession of the Gospel (Philipians 1.27 Geneva Bible Marginal Note).

The notes are more implicit about the role the congregation has to provide an adequate

minister. They, not the king, must be sure that “nothing unworthy” enters into the Gospel. The note also says that “fighting” means “to stand, and it is proper to wrestlers, that stand fast, and shrink not a foot” (Philippians 1.27 Geneva Bible Marginal Note.) These are fighting words. The stance is that of a wrestler. This is not a passive activity.

Further, the chapter addresses the problem of idle preachers, those who neglect their duties. Leigh condemns preachers who preach for money and even expect to be paid before they perform their duties. She advises, “I warn you, for the love I beare to your soules and bodies; if you cannot get the people to provide a Preacher, which may dispence the Word truly and sincerely, remove you, where you may have and heare the Word so preached” (236). If this is unsuccessful, she proposes a democratic response. “Moue the people,” she admonishes, “to prouide themselvues a Preacher. . . speake to the Magistrates, mourne to see the Alehouses full, and the Church of God empty” (233). Although she does not call for a mutiny, she does present here a form of dissent. Authorities fined people for not attending church. Puritans, however, often participated in the controversial and illegal practice of “gadding.” Leigh exhorts the people to go gadding, which meant moving from one congregation to another in search of an effective preacher. They would try to avoid fines by attending their own congregation, but then they would visit other congregations as well in search of a more effective preacher, someone who could feed their spiritual hunger, so to speak (Gray, *Women Writers* 580).

This type of behavior challenges James’s *Basilicon Doron*, which insists that the public reverence ministers (574). Leigh accuses preachers of being too busy seeking material goods and neglecting their duty to the Church. She quotes Isaiah 56.10 that refers to negligent preachers as “dumb dogs that will not barke.” The marginal note for

this verse reveals, “Their watchmen are all blind; they have no knowledge: they are all dumb dogs: they cannot bark. They lie and sleep and delight in sleep.” She accuses the preachers of “darkening” the “Gospell” with “thicke clods of this earthen world.” Then she corrects herself: “Did I say darken their light? Nay they . . . driue many from Christ by loue of their owne. . . & by idlenes & negligence in preaching.” She has already identified men who were too busy for the things of God, but here she points directly at idle preachers, accusing them of the sin Swetnam assigned to all women. “Yet some of them will say, they must not lose their goods & right: rather they must go to law for them: but contrary to the Law of God, they neglect their duty in his Church, they doe not studie how to divide the word of God aright, & to give to every one that which is fit for him, What doth the holie Ghost call negligent Preachers, but dumb dogs that will not barke? The dog will barke and give warning to the whole household” (240).

Near the end of *The Mothers Blessing*, Leigh reminds readers that the enemy usually marshals all of his forces against the leaders, rather than the individual soldiers. She reminds them that if the enemy gets the leader, then he often gets the subordinate individuals as well. Then she quotes I Kings 32:31 claiming that the enemy (the devil) is not unlike the enemy to the Israelites who claimed to “Fight neither against not more nor less, but against the King of Israel.” In other words, she reminds the reader that the enemy looks to fight against the leaders, rather than common individuals. Note that this parable applies to both preachers and also the king.

The king of Israel was Ahab. He sought out prophets who would give him information that he wanted to hear. He chose to listen to false prophets and rejected the true prophet Micah who warned him that he would be killed if he went to battle. The

prophet told Ahab that dogs would “lick his blood.” He dismissed the warnings and entered into a league with Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah. According to the story, this alliance did not please God. Together, Ahab and Jehoshaphat decided to attack the Assyrians. For his own protection, Ahab convinced Jehoshaphat to dress in Ahab’s armor. A case of mistaken identity ensued, and the Assyrians pursued Jehoshaphat, thinking Jehoshaphat was Ahab. However, Jehoshaphat called out, and the Assyrians recognized the deception. A “certain man” shot an arrow at Ahab, and the arrow entered through a chink in his armor. He bled to death in the chariot. When the chariot was later washed, his blood washed onto the ground, and dogs “licked up” the blood of Ahab, just as the prophet had warned (I Kings 22).

The reference could have been intended to remind preachers and James of the dangers of not heeding the words of God and to avoid acting according to their own will and bringing calamities on the people because of their actions.⁹³ James acknowledged that the actions of a king are constantly on a stage. His enemies aim at the high target of the king, not at anyone “less.” That was why Ahab wanted to change armor with Jehoshaphat in the first place: to deflect attention from himself and remove himself as the target.

Leigh could have had several purposes for referencing this account, and the account has various levels of interpretations. It is, of course, a warning to the preachers. This reference falls at the end of Leigh’s writing. The *Blessing* ends with a strong warning directed at the preachers, a reminder of their responsibility to be positive examples. But there are other ways to interpret the story as Leigh’s audience was

⁹³ Christine Luckyj follows this line of logic as she argues that Rachel Speght is doing the same thing (“A mouzell” 114).

accustomed to these layers of meanings. The biblical text uses the word “king” rather than “preacher.”

Leigh appears to encourage a variety of interpretations by ending her last chapter with a plea for the people to pray for preachers and “all such as are in high places” (Leigh 270). Many of Leigh’s scriptural references occur in the margins of the text.⁹⁴ However, in this case, she quotes the biblical reference directly in the text; she does not simply refer to it in the margins: “Fight against no more nor less, but against the King of Israel” (270). It would perhaps be logical for her readers to think about a king who was making alliances that would displease God, such as an alliance with Spain, that” popish” nation. At this point in the sermon, Leigh offers an example from everyday life that would help her audience to relate to her message. She offers an original parable, and in a sense Leigh writes her own gospel.

The Parable of the Puddle

Her parable begins with “Take heed therefore, for as an usurping Tyrant, who having gotten once possession of a kingdome, will ever after lay claim to it” (261). She is referencing her original claim that once Satan takes over the mighty Captain he will not let go but will fight to keep his newly won territory. This is like a noble and worthy-minded man passing by a puddle, and he sees some harlot throwing her own son into the puddle, throwing him away. The man tries to find the father, no luck. He learns that contrary to nature, the father has run away, leaving the child to utter destruction. The good master takes the child in, teaches him, raises him, and gives him a good estate.

⁹⁴ The scriptural references in the margins are accessible only by looking at the pdf photocopies of the book pages. The “printable” version of the text from EEBO leaves off the references. So, a person looking at the downloadable “printable” copies does not see the scripture references in the text. These references aid in a proper interpretation of the text, but unfortunately, they require the researcher to download each pdf thumbnail copy of the page in order to access the reference.

Then the good master has to go to a far country. He leaves the young man in charge of collecting rent. What if that man deals wickedly while the master was gone? What if he “lets” the land to enemies and goes for “a little more rent” that the Master does not care “one wit for.” Would that not be bad? When the master returned, would he not take out his sword and go to battle against the ungrateful young man?

Leigh interprets the parable by claiming that this is what happened when our mother Eve threw us in the puddle, and our father Adam ran away and abandoned us. Christ rescued us and taught us his doctrine. He left his goods with us, told us not to marry with the enemy, not to be unequally yoked, “yet for a little money [the evil man] wilt buy and sell, marry and give in marriage with them, yea & thinkest, because thou findest them more rich in the world, they are better for thee to deal withal; & yet they are utter enemies of thy Lord and will be ready at his coming to bid him battle, and strike at him with his owne sword” (260-264).

This topic became more politically charged as the potential match between Charles and the Spanish Bride drew nearer. James wanted the match because of Spain’s money (Stewart 315). Yet, James claimed in *Basilikon Doron* that his son should choose a wife of his own religion, lest the kingdom would be in an uproar. However, by 1616, he condemned anyone who crossed him in his decision to have Charles marry the Spanish Bride because he was determined to have his way. James appeared to many individuals as fraternizing with the enemy and of literally inviting a viper into the kingdom that would bring about destruction (Vanhoutte 332).

The English people had cause to be concerned. Recent history had witnessed the St. Bartholomew Massacres that occurred in the context of a Catholic marrying a

Protestant. Approximately five thousand people were slaughtered within a few days. By 1620, discussion of Charles's marriage to the Spanish Bride could get a person arrested or at least censured, and yet Leigh's *The Mothers Blessing* consistently came out with at least one edition a year for nearly twenty years. We can only guess how her audience "conceived" her writing.

In most "dying parent" legacies, and in the most popular funeral sermons of women who died exemplary deaths, the final scenes usually retell the epic battle of the dying person (woman) with Satan. For example, in the conduct manual *The Crystalle Glass*, Philip Stubbs relates his young wife's final moments as she conquers the enemy, surrounded by her family and the preacher. They witness her valiant battle to the end. Her last words indicate her disregard for the world and her desire to be with God. She gives her child to her husband's care and rejects the world in order to join God.

Katherine Brettergh is another example of a woman whose death promoted her life story as one of vigorous anti-Catholic activism. She provides "yet another example of an early modern woman whose faith, which was more deeply rooted and felt than that of her husband's, gave her the strength to take on the dominant religious role in the family." (Phillippy 104). Three popular funeral sermons were published after Brettergh's death, each going through several editions. One preacher, William Hinde, reports that her death was a form of "ecstasy." They report her as saying "O happy am I, that ever I was borne, to see this blessed day!" As death overcomes her, she announced, "My warfare is accomplished, and my iniquities are pardoned." And with that, the author states, "she presently fell asleep in the Lord, passing away in peace, without any motion of body at all; and so yielded up the Ghost, a sweet Sabboaths sacrifice." Brettergh's death

provided a powerful *exemplum* for others. She was praised for her “masculine courage, wisdom and confidence in the face of death” (105).

In contrast, Leigh’s final words seem oddly out of place. Indeed, she turns the entire deathbed battle-scene upside down. Instead of being surrounded by the ministers who are praying for her as she fights her last great battle with Satan, Leigh appears genuinely concerned with what is going on in the world she claims to be leaving. *She* is not fighting any kind of climactic battle with Satan. Indeed, she describes a constant battle, one she has fought throughout her life. Now, at the close of her *Blessing*, instead of having preachers pray for *her*, Leigh is praying for the preachers. Not only that, she is telling everyone else to pray for them “and all such as are in high places.”

This highly unusual occurrence concludes her *Blessing* with a rousing call to action, a plea for everyone to pray for leaders who have a responsibility to set an example for the people. In that way, her *Blessing* is unlike anything else in the genre of conduct literature. “For as our preachers should pray for al, so all should send up their praiers to Almightye God. . . to send his holie Spirit into the hearts of the Preachers. . . Wherefore I earnestlie entreat you, let your praiers alwaies be sent up to God, through Christ, for the Preachers & all such as are in high places, that so they continueing firme and stedfast, your faith may them be more confirmed.” The last sentence of *The Mothers Blessing* asks God to be with “you all” from now until “the worlds end. Amen.” This is not the usual emotional deathbed scene of a dying mother. Leigh knew her *Mothers Blessing* would not be published until after she died. *The Mothers Blessing* is very much about living. There is no ultimate last epic battle with Satan. Indeed, her last sentence sounds much more like a sermon, in this case a sermon to “all,” including the preachers.

In this chapter, Leigh is in the company of godly men, or I should say godly individuals. Placing herself in this kind of company tells us how Leigh saw herself. It tells us how she valued the genre and how she saw it function in society. That she successfully delivers the printed sermons is further evidence of her intellectual activity. Her writing no longer appears as a conduct manual, or as a dying parent legacy, or even as a sermon. It is something unique. It is evidence of a good person speaking well. It is evidence of a good person speaking confidently. It is evidence of a fearfull, faithfull, and carefull mother, with all of the rhetorical power that comes along with the title of *mother*.

CHAPTER 7

THE LEGACY OF *THE MOTHERS BLESSING*

Give unto her the fruit of her hands, and let her works praise her in the gates
Proverbs 31:31

This study set out to answer the question: What did Dorothy Leigh do that made *The Mothers Blessing* so successful in the male-dominated print culture of the early seventeenth century? Although the examples I have provided are in no way comprehensive, they do suggest some of the significant strategies that moved her writing beyond traditional early modern print limitations. The most important thing Leigh did was to carefully construct “noble” ethos. Ethos is not a container that Leigh fills at one particular point on one particular page. Rather, ethos is pervasive. It is everywhere at all times, for better or for worse.

Leigh’s careful attention to ethos evoked trust in her readers. It opened the gates, so to speak. She created “noble” ethos by behaving with decorum in her domestic space. By that, I mean that she acted in ways that her contemporary culture would have expected and praised. She demonstrated their shared values. All discourse emanates from a particular space, and Leigh is careful to situate her discourse within a domestic space. She also created “noble” ethos through her choice of genre. Her discourse comes from the pages of a conduct manual, a space appropriated for offering guidance and counsel. By pushing the boundaries of the conduct manual, she situates herself among the seventeenth century’s “godly” and “learned” clergy. Both of these spaces—domestic space and the conduct manual space—are complex *thirdspaces* filled with the potential to augment or diminish “noble” ethos.

The essence of my method consisted in trying to place *The Mothers Blessing* and several comparison texts within such contexts as to enable us to identify what the authors of these texts were *doing* in writing them.⁹⁵ I wanted to investigate the range of things that writers are capable of doing in (and by) their use of words and sentences.

In more particular ways, my goal was to isolate specific strategies that Leigh deploys to construct ethos. One characteristic of Leigh's writing that is apparent is her tone. Leigh maintains a reasonable and calm tone. Her most impassioned exhortations occur when she discusses a woman's role in the context of Joseph Swetnam's insults and also when she discusses the preachers' role. Even then, however, one does not get the impression that she is overly emotional. She explains her concerns and supports them with evidence. Her use of simple and elegant language makes the tone inviting and authoritative. Her continual use of monosyllabic words reflects biblical exhortations apparent in William Tyndale's translation of the Bible. Her common sense expressions such as "I have never seen such senseless stupidity as to dislike one's own choice when one has the entire world to choose from" sounds like a stern mother's voice. This tone is appropriate to the domestic space. However, rather than a scolding mother, she is the constantly "fearfull and carefull" mother.

Her careful attention to tone creates ethos. Her tone is never angry or argumentative in spite of engaging in heated discourse. This is an important skill to learn, and it is a skill that transcends her time. As teacher of writers and as communicators at every level, perhaps we should be more aware of the effect that contention can produce in an "argument." Perhaps it would be helpful to evaluate our insistence on teaching "argumentative" writing. Dorothy Leigh exhibits the power of an

⁹⁵ I follow here Quentin Skinner's methodology in *Reason and Rhetoric in the Philosophy of Hobbes*.

impassioned and successful reponse while refusing to become combative. In Chapter 3, I show how she dismantles Swetnam's arguments by using Swetnam's own words and phrases, but she never becomes angry or condescending. This invites us to study *contentio* as opposed to *sermo*. This is an area that needs further investigation. I did not isolate and define those terms, but investigating Leigh's writing through the lens of *sermo* would prove enlightening. It may also offer us suggestions for teaching writing and rhetoric in our own classrooms. Leigh also strategically deploys silence at appropriate moments, and by comparison of other texts and the early seventeenth century perceptions about silence, we can expand our understanding. Silence is confidence. She does not need to name James or Swetnam in order to address them. She knows that it is best to answer a fool with silence (Perkins *Government of the Tongue*). And she demonstrates how to do that.

The Mothers Blessing provides us with important information about genres, not so that we can categorize, but so that we can learn about the writer, her perception of herself generally and her perception of herself in society. By appropriating a conduct manual genre, Leigh places herself in a position of authority. She is the mother who dispenses advice ostensibly to her children. She can also assume the role of a preacher. Leigh's writing shows the marks of formal written sermons with such evidence and force that she places herself in the company of some of the most learned and intellectual men in England. That association alone should cause us to pause and look more closely at what we have on our hands in *The Mothers Blessing*. In Chapter 6, Leigh preaches to the preachers. She even criticizes some of them for wasting their breath arguing over which sin is the worst. Her common sense is evident when she advises everyone to leave all sin.

There is more work that needs to be done in the area of sermons. I suspect that this project has muddied the waters even more than they were. What is the relationship between an oral and a print sermon? Much remains to be done in that area. Mothers have been preaching for as long as time. At what point does a mother's advice turn into a formal sermon? Sermons from the early years of the seventeenth century offer us a unique window through which to view the speakers and the audience. Also, we could probably learn a thing or two about communication. How could John Donne, for example, keep 10,000 people entertained during a two-hour sermon ("Sermons"). Have times changed that much? Or have people changed? Many people in Donne's day slept through sermons and complained of boring sermons. What did Donne do that enthralled that many people for that amount of time, and how does it compare to the more plain style of preachers such as John Dod and Dorothy Leigh. How does the print version contrast to the oral version? These are questions that this project did not address.

One thing this project illustrates is the way that a person can navigate through *conceived* barriers. I am using the term *conceived* in the context of my discussion of thirdspace. Barriers are places, and Leigh clearly encountered barriers in her early seventeenth-century world. How a person *conceives* barriers is critical to the formation of ethos. Ethos stems in part from confidence. Leigh's writing exudes confidence. Confidence comes, as John Dod expressed in *Bathshebaes Instruction*, from preparation and knowledge. Leigh's good sense and wisdom created ethos that moved her outside of *conceived* barriers. For example, women were not supposed to publish books under their own names, not even Jane Austen two centuries later, and those who did were sometimes branded as scolds, even posthumously. Leigh's writing demonstrates that with the right

ethos, conceived barriers are surmountable. That notion is extremely attractive to me as a teacher of rhetoric and composition. Leigh's writing could be a study in the creation of ethos. However, it is a complex and highly rhetorical activity. By that I mean that situations and audiences change even when messages remain constant, and an effective rhetor will modify discourse to meet the needs of the audience. As a teacher of writing, that is one of the most important concepts I would like my students to learn. Isolating and articulating Leigh's strategies may provide insight and hope for students who perceive themselves outside of certain boundaries.

One way that Leigh overcomes those boundaries is by assuming identities. She is unique in that she does not assume an identity to try to deceive, but to try to help instead. So motivation is critical to her ethos. What would happen if we could teach students to see themselves as "a writer of research papers" or as "a successful student"? What boundaries do they face? Leigh assumes the role of *a man* and *a preacher*. She demonstrates how to assume an identity while maintaining ethos.

Leigh ends *The Mothers Blessing* by attempting to "move" people. She wants them to pray for the preachers because preachers are more powerful than kings.⁹⁶ Along with prayer she suggests action, an exhortation to force officials to provide a preacher—even through illegal activity—so that they can hear the Word of God. Beginnings or proems, are critical to successful rhetoric, but so are endings.

Leigh ends with a sermon, and the sermon ends with a call to live, to live actively and faithfully and to be engaged in social, political, and religious discourse. She does not

⁹⁶ For the same sentiment, see Erasmus *Ecclesiastes* and George Herbert *The Country Parson*. Both of them use those same words. They claim that preachers are more powerful and more important than kings. They both claim that preachers are like "Gods" among the people.

allow herself to be confined by gender. To her, home is not a confining sphere any more than genre is. She finds ways to transcend both of those spaces.

She also ends with death, her literal death. Leigh stated “And seeing my selfe going out of the world, and you but coming in, I know not how to performe this duty so well, as to leave you these few lines” (7). The title page describes Leigh as a “gentlewoman, not long since deceased” (1). Leigh’s literal death did not erase her nor was her death necessary in order to free her from the potential stigma of publication. Publishing after death represents Leigh’s rhetorical choice, an effective one in her case. Her final silence augmented her ethos. However, for Leigh, silence is never a negative space. It is a place of meditation. It is not imposed on her. It is not a condition to be avoided. Even death is not to be shunned. Leigh’s depiction of death is one of the mildest descriptions in early modern writing, similar to George Herbert’s.⁹⁷ Silence is to be applied artfully in response to attacks such as Swetnam’s attack. It is to be used with decorum in response to political leaders who veer off the right path such as James. It is to be sought after in a person’s attempt to hear the Word of God. Silence goes with meditation and prayer, a form of divine communication. Private reading is another form of active and positive silence. Silence leads one to the sustaining manna that every individual needs to gather and store somewhere so it can be recalled in times of need. Silence is not a negative space. It represents a rhetorical choice that wields power and creates credibility.

To meet one’s *end* also addresses a person’s *purpose*. Erasmus explains it at the end of *Ecclesiastes*.

⁹⁷ See Herbert’s “Death”

The final end brings a happiness beyond which there is nothing to desire. For example a sheep has achieved its own happiness when it clothes and feeds someone, since this is the purpose for which the animal was born; if it could talk, a plucked flower delighting someone's eyes and nose would thank its planter because it is happily achieving the end for which it was planted. Hence those who look for happiness in the things that do not satisfy a man's soul and do not bring him tranquility are violently mistaken; anyone wanting a restful soul needs to find rest in God. (650).

These are the last words of Erasmus's instructions to preachers about how to preach a sermon. He ends his instruction with commentary about endings and their importance to the entire rhetorical performance of delivering a sermon. The end should gather everything up and stress the point made at the beginning, but it should also meet its purpose. What is a rhetor's *end*, in this sense of the word? A conduct manual's *end* is to instruct people in the proper way to live. A sermon's *end* is to move them to action. As a rhetor, Leigh's *end* is to move people, to influence the behavior of at least one person. She met her *end* in that sense by preaching a sermon, an appropriate choice for deliberative rhetoric. We know her audience responded actively to her writing.⁹⁸ In a sense, at the end of her manual, all of the ends meet: her manual's *end*, her rhetorical *end*, and her life's *end*. Together, those endings form her legacy, a legacy that extended beyond the intimate circle of her three sons.

⁹⁸ The writing of *A Mothers Teares*, and also the act of binding *The Mothers Blessing* and *The Fathers Blessing* together. We know her sons valued her work by their active publication of her book, possibly as a sort of memorial to their mother. Reading is an "active" response, especially according to Leigh's description of reading. It is not a passive activity.

In this project, I had an *end* in mind. I wanted to show that Leigh's work is highly rhetorical, that she artfully and naturally used strategies that created such a pervasive ethos that boundaries of genre and domestic space gave way. I wanted to put Leigh in the middle of debates that were often chaotic and noisy.

I wanted to investigate the construction and power of ethos in Leigh's writing. Ethos appears to be the key to her success. It allows her to transcend boundaries. I looked at various ways Leigh constructed ethos. She behaved with decorum from within her space. This did not mean she simply followed the prescribed rules. In the first place, the rules provided in conduct books and sermons was sometimes contradictory, but I believe critics focus too much on what appears to be the exceptions rather than the norms. Power that was given was not equally distributed among gender lines. However, there seems to be plenty of evidence that suggests a mutually respectful relationship between husbands and wives as a general rule. Focusing exclusively on Swetnam and the *quarrel des femmes* points to exceptions rather than norms.

Leigh helps us to sort out the misperceptions and offers us a new perspective. The persuasive ethos that she builds appears to spring from nature and art. Nature provides her with strong emotion; art allows her to temper the emotion.⁹⁹ Emotion provides her with a natural eloquence, but evidence exists that she studied and applied the techniques of "rhetoryke" as outlined by Wilson and Perkins and practiced by Dod and others. Leigh's ethos is not a single incident, for it dwells "pervasively" (Smith). It emanates from rhetorical spaces, including the domestic sphere and the conduct manual and sermon genres.

⁹⁹ Erasmus's discussion of fear and fearfull (fear is bad, fearful is good). Emotion is good when it is restrained.

Boundaries are fluid in the renaissance and early modern periods. Navigating between and among boundaries creates obstacles. My project has several limitations. In the first place, I have assumed that Leigh's *The Mothers Blessing* had no editors although it could be said to have been "edited" by someone if only by the process of printing the text. I suppose someone could have edited it. There is so little information about Leigh historically that I do not know if her writing went through a son's editing revision or not. Interestingly, there are no theories out there about someone else editing her work. In contrast, many other female writers have been known to have been edited, or there are at least conspiracy theories that claim other authorship. I have yet to see one of those theories for Leigh. For some reason, we seem to believe that is she who she says she is. That reinforces my entire point about her ethos. This ethos comes exclusively from the black symbols on the page, not from any prior knowledge of her life. This lack of knowledge suggests the need for more biographical research into Dorothy Leigh, not because it would increase her ethos, but because it would further establish it. I think it is possible to find out more biographical information about Leigh. This can and should be done. In my research, I have found evidence that her family is connected to the famous Protestant preacher William Leigh, who was a preacher for Queen Elizabeth. William recorded Elizabeth's famous speech to the troops at Tillsbury. There is a record of William Leigh speaking at the funeral of Ralph Leigh who was a gentleman from Essex who bears approximately the same birth year as Ralph Leigh, the father-in-law of Dorothy Leigh.¹⁰⁰ If indeed we are looking at the correct family, then we should be able to find information about Dorothy Leigh.

¹⁰⁰ This is based on Poole's and Gray's identification of Ralph Leigh as the husband of Dorothy Leigh. That information also needs to be verified.

My project is also limited by the narrow scope of time and place. I chose a narrow swath of years on purpose so that I could focus on the phenomenon of Leigh's print *in its context*. A discussion of her writing benefits from limiting the years so as not to exceed the middle of the seventeenth century because of the drastic changes in printing and censorship laws. However, a discussion of the "influence" of Leigh's work would benefit from expanding the years beyond the 1650s. Leigh's work was not in demand after those years, as far as we know; and it has not been my purpose to trace her influence, but it may be enlightening to look into the possibility that her work came across the ocean on the Mayflower, to use an exaggerated metaphor. If books such as Dod's sermon about the Ten Commandments were almost identically well received by the reading public, and also identified as a "must have" for even the "poorest" man's library (Field), then it might be that Leigh's book was in those same libraries as well. I have illustrated that her book and Dod's writing share much in common, including topics, themes, and tone. Also, there is considerable evidence that the puritans in America were actively interested in events in England during the English Civil Wars, and they valued books. Anne Bradstreet wrote some things that are quite similar to Leigh's writing. My project did not address writings outside of the boundaries of England. There were significant debates going on all over the continent and women publishing in other areas, including Protestant areas such as Switzerland.¹⁰¹ I did not address possible connections between them, and that may have added some insights into my project.

I have dredged up John Dod's sermons, and they have altered my perception of early modern sermons. His writing is engaging, witty, and highly readable. Dod's work

¹⁰¹Katharina Schutz Zell was an example of an early sixteenth-century woman in Germany who published the sermon that she gave at her husband's funeral.

was published for one hundred years. Ironically, today his work is obtained with much difficulty. More research into his writing and making it more accessible to others might totally change people's perceptions of sermons and of the people who listened to them.¹⁰²

I acknowledge that in discussing Leigh's writing and the "writing of women" that I discuss only a small segment of women who were probably noble women. However, I find here that we may fall prey to popular notions, as well. Yes, she was a gentlewoman. The title page tells us as much when it states "*The Mothers Blessing. Or The godly counsaile of a Gentle-woman not long since deceased, left behind her for her Children*" (1). She describes herself as "poor," but so does Lady Hoby, and she was certainly not poor by most of their standards or our standards. In spite of those observations, if Leigh was as widely read as the numbers indicate then possibly many of the poorer classes were reading her books, as many of them could afford books that circulated widely. Maybe it is wrong to be too exclusive in that sense. Perhaps she can enlighten us a little bit about those classes, too, in the same way that we see sermons as perpetuating and changing people's beliefs, both at the same time. Maybe she influenced and changed more people than we realize.¹⁰³

Erasmus claims that the end is the most important part of a rhetorical performance: "Moreover the end is so important that everything is judged from it and the success of each endeavour is argued from it." I would like to end my project as Leigh ended hers, namely with an invitation to action. There is so much more to learn about

¹⁰² The new handbook takes a huge step in that direction. I have not had time to read the whole thing, but it is a welcome beginning. However, it has only ONE reference to John Dod. Dod's name is included in a list of other "popular" preachers, so even though that book is a step in the right direction, I think we need to have more access to the writing, so we can judge for ourselves, and also so we can see what THEY the early modern audience valued.

¹⁰³ I am thankful for Edith Snooks' insights. They look at the possibility that Leigh's writing showcases the involvement of women in education and reading.

Dorothy Leigh and the strategies that she used. In addition, my *end* has been to contribute something of worth to the discourse surrounding Leigh's text. Shakespeare may have left his second-best bed to his wife, but he also left a huge legacy that scholars continue to sort through and contribute to. Leigh left nothing of material value that we know of. Instead, her legacy was one of love, built on ethos, and buried by time. I would like to see more scholars sifting through and contributing to the legacy left us.

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